

THE  
BOOK OF  
CLASSIC  
ENGLISH  
POETRY

600-1830



Selected by  
EDWIN  
MARKHAM



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Selected by  
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DEDICATED

To

THE POETS OF ALL AGES AND OF ALL LANDS,

*Who heard through the roar of mortal things*

*The God's immortal whisperings—*

*Saw the world-wonder rise and fall,*

*And knew that Beauty made it all.*





The poet is one who "inscribes things  
unapparent in apparent fabrications."

—Zoroaster

"The purpose of the artist [poet] is to  
complete the incomplete designs of nature."

—Aristotle

"The origin of poetry lies in a thirst for  
a wilder beauty than earth supplies."

—Edgar Allan Poe

"Poetry is that impassioned arrangement  
of words (whether in verse or prose) which  
embodies the exaltation, the beauty, the  
rhythm, and the pathetic truth of life."

—Richard Le Gallienne

"Poetry is the expression—under the light  
of the imagination—of the unfamiliar beauty  
of the world, the beauty that is 'the smile  
upon the face of truth'. Poetry is the revela-  
tion of the strange in the familiar, of the  
eternal in the transitory. It is the impas-  
sioned cry of the heart in the presence of  
the wonder of life."

—Edwin Markham



VOICES OUT OF  
THE EARLY MIST





## VOICES OUT OF THE EARLY MIST

THE earliest recorded literature of our English race is Anglo-Saxon, and the earliest of this literature is poetry.

When the troops of imperial Rome were summoned home from the British Isles early in the fifth century to defend the empire against the inroads of Teutonic invaders, strife sprang up among the Celtic tribes left in possession. The southern Celts, less hardy because they had been under the Roman heel, were swooped upon by their kinsmen from the north and west, who bade fair to overwhelm them. The losing southerners cried for help to the Teutonic tribes who lived on and near the easterly shore of the North Sea—Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The summoned allies did not cease, however, with beating off the opponents of the southern Celts: they went on to overrun the country for themselves, driving the remnants of the Britons into Scotland, Wales and Cornwall.

For six hundred years the language of these Teutonic conquerors formed the speech of England. It is called Anglo-Saxon; and although it is the fountain-head of current speech in England and America today, it is a language wholly unintelligible to us without study.

The poetic literature of the Anglo-Saxons expresses, within a remarkably small compass, the life and thought of a people. "If there is anything truly national in the world, it is the old heroic songs of our English folk."

The style is elliptical, abrupt, exclamatory, glowing. Swift impassioned images leap out like flashes of fire from cloud.

## VOICES OUT OF THE EARLY MIST

Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were a brood of lusty livers, with something inalienably heroic in the mould of them. They loved fighting and eating and drinking and vaunting. In their poetry is reflected the pride and melancholy of the race, its trust in sinew and its flair for adventure. There is a harsh and masculine joy in hardship:

"Then we together on the sea going,  
Fared five nights forth; by floods hurled apart;  
Weltering the waves; weather the coldest,  
With darkest night, and northern wind,  
Battle-grim billows, rough-crashing breakers—  
The mood of the sea-beasts turned into rage."

There is a zest in the clash of battle:

"In perils of battle  
On places of slaughter—  
The struggle of standards,  
The rush of the javelins,  
The crash of the charges,  
The wielding of weapons—  
The play that they played with  
The children of Edward."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,  
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf  
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,  
Shipmen and Scotsmen."

\* \* \* \* \*

## VOICES OUT OF THE EARLY MIST

The philosophy of Anglo-Saxon poetry, even of that written after Christianity had come, is temperamentally fatalistic.

"Radiant the mead-halls in that city bright,  
Yea, many were its baths. High rose its wealth  
Of hornèd pinnacles, while loud within  
Was heard the joyous revelry of men—  
Till mighty Fate came with her sudden change!"

"Wyrd" it is that governs the world, the Word decreed by Fate. But these people by no means permitted themselves to be cowed by "Wyrd"; rather they pressed the harder because the edge was sharp. They faced the world with its loneliness and with its evil as only brave men could. In the lament of the minstrel Deor, he remembers in old times the woes of others who suffered more, and still strove on and overcame, and so will he!

In form this old poetry is directly opposed to the principles of modern verse. It lacks rhyme and a measured line.

It is speech straight from the shoulder, thought straight from the heart. The crowding passion of meaning precludes conscious simile, although the very language is compound of imagery. It was natural for the author of *Beowulf* to speak of a ship as a "floater foamy-necked", of night as "the shadow-covering of creatures", and of cliffs as "the windy land walls". With these living phrases, which nevertheless the Saxon poets must have considered the plain way of speech, the song was made, "without connectives, without order, with no ornament but three words beginning alike, an exclamation, a cry, a glowing image. Joy and fury neglect art. When passion bellows, ideas are crowded and clashed."

## VOICES OUT OF THE EARLY MIST

Thus in the battle-song of *The Fight at Finsburgh*:

"The army goes forth:  
The birds sing,  
The cricket chirps,  
The war-weapons sound,  
The lance clangs against the shield.  
Now shineth the moon, wandering under the sky.  
Now arise deeds of woe,  
Which the enmity of this people prepares to do.  
Then in the court came the tumult of war-carnage.  
The raven whirled about,  
Dark and sombre like a willow leaf.  
There was a sparkling of blades,  
As if all Finsburgh were on fire."

Every people has its Hercules or its Samson, its ideal of brute energy—some one who strangles dragons, cracks the jaws of lions, or sends fear and death on hostile armies.

Sometimes this national ideal is of a higher order. Sometimes, to his physical prowess and iron will, he adds the large heart of the truly heroic. He is then heralded as the great captain who is just and noble, and who sallies forth to free his land of giant fiends or of invading dragons. Such a hero is the central figure in our earliest English epic, *Beowulf*, imported—anonymous—from its Continental homeland early in the eighth century, and revised by some unknown Christian bard.

We call him Christian because none other would have referred to Cain, would have called the people heathens, and would have written the couplet:

"When sorrow on him came and pain befel,  
He left the joy of men and chose God's light."



## VOICES OUT OF THE EARLY MIST

The heroic Beowulf is a mighty knight errant before the dawn of Chivalry, one whose sword is ever pulsing in his hand. Let me tell his story with the help of Alfred Welsh, and others. Beowulf has had terrific experiences. He rowed his boat amid storming winter seas, when the many-colored sea-monsters drew him to the ocean bottom, held him fast in their grip till he reached the wretches with the point of his broadsword.

Beowulf crosses the sea to succor Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, whose banquet halls were sorrowful because Grendel, an oger, "a mighty haunter of the marshes", had entered at night, seized thirty of the sleeping warriors and carried their carcasses to his dwelling in the deep fens. For twelve long winters the fiend had devoured men, till houses were standing empty.

The daring Beowulf offers to grapple with the monstrous oger. When the mists are spread out and all is still, Grendel enters and seizes a sleeping warrior, crushes his bone-casings, drinks his blood and swallows him with "continual tearings". But the hero seizes him in turn, and in the struggle the sinews of the monster spring asunder, the bone-casings burst; and leaving on the ground his hand and arm and shoulder, he flees to his somber fen sick unto death.

But a female monster remains, "the sea-wolf of the abyss, the mighty sea-woman", the mother of Grendel. She steals in at night, and, amidst drawn swords, tears and devours the king's chosen friend. Beowulf follows the ogress to her dread abode, where fearsome dragons and serpents swim. Fire flashes at night over the flood, while at intervals the horn sings a wild terrible dirge.

Beowulf plunges into this watery abyss, and the ogress, seizing the hero in her horrid clutches, carries

## VOICES OUT OF THE EARLY MIST

him to her den, where a pale gleam shines and shows them face to face. She overthrows him: he starts up and espies and seizes "an old gigantic sword, doughty of edge, the work of giants". Fierce and savage, despairing of life, he strikes furiously, breaks her "bone-rings", passes through the doomed body, which sinks, and all is silent.

"The sword was bloody, the man rejoiced in his deed:  
The beam shone, light stood within,  
Even as from heaven mildly shines  
The lamp of the firmament."

THE BOOK OF  
CLASSIC ENGLISH POETRY  
600-1830



## *The Death-Going of Scyld*

FROM "BEOWULF"

FORTH he fared at the fateful moment,  
Scyld the Grim into God's protection.  
Then they bore him over to ocean's billow. . . .  
In the roadstead rocked the ring-prowed vessel  
(The lovèd leader had long possessed it)  
Ready and gleaming, a royal ship.  
There laid they down their darling lord  
In the boat's wide bosom, the breaker of rings,  
By the mast the mighty one. Many a treasure  
Fetched from far they flung beside him.  
Never have I known a ship nobler decked  
With weapons of war and weeds of battle,  
With blades and breastplate. On his bosom lay  
The heaped-up hoard that hence should go  
Far over the flood with him floating away.  
No less they gave him lordly gifts,  
Ampler treasure than erst did they  
Who in former time forth had sent him  
Sole over the sea, a suckling child.  
High over his head they hoist the standard,  
A golden banner; let billows take him,  
Gave him to ocean: grave was their spirit,  
Mournful their mood. For men are powerless  
To say in sooth, sons of the hall,  
Heroes under heaven, who welcomed that freight!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Gummere.

## *The Haunt of Grendel*

IT was a dismal land,  
Wolf-haunted cliffs and windy headlands,  
Fen-ways fearful, where flows the stream  
From mountains gliding 'neath gloom of rocks,  
Underground flood. Not far is it hence,  
By measure of miles, that the mere expands;  
And over it the frost-bound forest hanging,  
Sturdily rooted, overshadows the wave.  
In the dark of night is a dread to see:  
Fire on the waters. No wight so brave  
Of the sons of men who will search that flood!  
Nay, though the heath-pacer, harried by dogs,  
The hornèd stag, this holt should seek,  
By hounds far-driven—his dear life here  
On the brink he yields ere he braves the plunge  
In those dismal waters!<sup>1</sup>

*After becoming king and after reigning fifty years, Beowulf goes forth to fight a monster worm, or fire-drake, in a cavern near the sea. After carving the worm in twain, the hero is killed by the flame-breath of the dragon; and as he dies, he utters these noble words:*

"There was not any king among my neighbors  
Who dared to greet me with warriors,  
To oppress me with terror.  
I used no treacherous malice,  
Nor swore unjustly many oaths.  
Because of all this,  
I—sick with mortal wounds—may have a joy."

<sup>1</sup>Translated by Gummere.

## CAEDMON

ENGLAND, 7TH CENTURY

THE christianizing of the Anglo-Saxons early in their period of supremacy resulted not only in modifying their language by the addition of Latin words, but also in affecting the substance of their poetry. The first great name in English literature is Caedmon, who in the second half of the seventh century paraphrased various parts of Biblical history. Disraeli called this early poet, "the Milton of our forefathers"; and the resemblance between the two is veritably large. Both have a high and serious tone; and there are, moreover, striking resemblances between *The Paraphrase* and *Paradise Lost*. Besides likenesses of phrase, there will be found in both poems a sublime conception of Satan. In Caedmon, the Hebrew Tempter, transformed by the German sense of the might of individual manhood, becomes a republican, disdainful of vassalage to God.

### *The Beginning of Creation*

FROM "THE PARAPHRASE"

THEN thought within his mind the Lord of hosts  
How He again might fix within his rule  
The great creation, thrones of heavenly light  
High in the heavens for a better band,  
Since the proud scathers had relinquished them.  
The holy God, therefore, in his great might  
Willed that there should be set beneath heaven's span  
Earth, firmament, wide waves, created world,  
Replacing foes cast headlong from their home.

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## CAEDMON

Here yet was naught save darkness of the cave,  
The broad abyss, whereon the steadfast King  
Looked with his eyes and saw that space of gloom,  
Saw the dark cloud lower in lasting night,  
Deep and dim, vain, useless, strange to God,  
Black under heaven, wan, waste, till through his word  
The King of glory had created life.

Here first the eternal Father, guard of all,  
Of heaven and earth, raised up the firmament:  
The almighty Lord set firm by his strong power  
This roomy land; grass greened not on the plain,  
Ocean far spread hid the wan ways in gloom.  
Then was the Spirit gloriously bright  
Of heaven's Keeper borne over the deep  
Swiftly. The Life-giver, the angels' Lord,  
Over the ample ground bade come forth light.  
Quickly the high King's bidding was obeyed,  
Over the waste there shone light's holy ray.  
Then parted He, Lord of triumphant might,  
Shadow from shining, darkness from the light.  
Light, by the word of God, was first named day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Gummere.



## CAEDMON

### *Satan's Presumption and Fall*

*Note here how startlingly similar are some phrases in "Paradise Lost" to some of the phrases in this old majestic rendering. Caedmon, as well as Milton, had the creative imagination.*

MUCH spake the angel of presumption, thought  
Through his own craft to make a stronger  
throne

Higher in heaven. His mind urged him, he said,  
That north and south he should begin to work,  
Found buildings; said he questioned whether he  
Would serve God.

"Wherefore", he said, "shall I toil?

No need have I of master. I can work  
With my own hands great marvels, and have power  
To build a throne more worthy of a God  
Higher in heaven. Why shall I for his smile  
Serve Him, bend to Him thus in vassalage?  
I may be God as He."

\* \* \* \* \*

When the Almighty heard  
How with great pride his angel raised himself  
Against his Lord, foolishly spake high words  
Against the supreme Father, he that deed  
Must expiate, and in the work of strife  
Receive his portion, take for punishment  
Utmost perdition. So doth every man  
Who sets himself in battle against God,  
In sinful strife against the Lord most high.

Then was the Mighty wroth: Heaven's highest Lord  
Cast him from his high seat, for he had brought

## CAEDMON

His Master's hate on him. His favor lost,  
The Good was angered against him, and he  
Must therefore seek the depth of Hell's fierce pains,  
Because he strove against Heaven's highest Lord,  
Who shook him from his favor, cast him down  
To the deep dales of Hell, where he became  
Devil. The fiend with all his comrades fell  
From Heaven, angels, for three nights and days,  
From Heaven to Hell, where the Lord changed them all  
To devils, because they his deed and word  
Refused to worship. Therefore in worse light  
Under the earth beneath, almighty God  
Had placed them triumphless in the swart hell.

There evening, immeasurably long,  
Brings to each fiend renewal of the fire;  
Then comes, at dawn, the east wind keen with frost;  
Its dart, or fire continual, torment sharp,  
The punishment wrought for them, they must endure.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Morley.

## ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 9TH OR 10TH CENTURY

### *From "The Grave"*

ADAPTED FROM LONGFELLOW'S TRANSLATION

FOR thee was a house built  
Ere thou wert born:  
For thee was a mold shapen  
Ere thou camest from thy mother.

ANONYMOUS

Its height is not determined,  
Nor is its depth measured;  
Nor is it closed up,  
Until I bring thee where thou shalt remain—  
Until I shall measure thee and the sod of the earth.

Thy house is not highly timbered:  
It is unhigh and low.  
When thou art in it,  
The heel-ways are low, the side-ways unhigh.  
The roof is built thy breast full nigh;  
So thou shalt in earth dwell full cold,  
Dim and dark.  
Doorless is that house  
And dark is it within.  
There thou art fast detained  
And Death holds the key,

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, ABOUT 1250

*Cuckoo Song*

*Modernized by E. M.*

SUMMER is a-coming in:  
Loud sing cuckoo.  
Groweth seed and bloweth mead,  
And springeth the wood anew.  
Sing cuckoo!

## ANONYMOUS

Ewe bleateth after lamb,  
Loweth after calf the cow,  
Bullock starteth, buck verteth:  
Merry sing cuckoo!

Cuckoo, cuckoo, well singest thou, cuckoo:  
Nor cease thou never now:  
Sing cuckoo, now, sing cuckoo,  
Sing cuckoo, sing cuckoo, now!

ROBERT MANNYNG, OF BRUNNE  
ENGLAND, 1260-1340

### *Praise of Women*

NO thyng ys to man so dere  
As wommanys love in gode manèr.  
A gode womman is mannys blys,  
There her love right and stedfast ys.  
There ys no solas under hevene  
Of alle that a man may nevene<sup>1</sup>  
That shulde a man so moche glew<sup>2</sup>  
As a gode womman that loveth true.  
Ne derer is none in Goddis hurde<sup>3</sup>  
Than a chaste womman with lovely worde.

<sup>1</sup> name.

<sup>2</sup> gladden.

<sup>3</sup> flock.

RICHARD ROLLE, OF HAMPOLE  
ENGLAND, ABOUT 1300-1349

*Love*

**L**OVE is a light burthen; love gladdens young and old;

Love is withouten pine, as lovers have me told;

Love is a ghostly wine that makes men big and bold;

Of love shall he nothing tine that it in heart will hold.

Love is the sweetest thing that man in earth has ta'en;

Love is God's darling, love binds blood and bane.

In love be our liking; I wot no better wane<sup>1</sup>

For me and my loving; Love makes both be anc.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> won through.

<sup>2</sup> one.

ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND, LATE 13TH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

*From "The Debate of the Body and the Soul"*

This poem is highly interesting as a historic document showing the irrational and horrific ideas of God and Hell prevalent in those early centuries. We get in it a vivid sense of medieval court life and of the terrors believed to be lurking behind the Veil. It opens with a vivid picture of the feudal life of knight and castle. The wit and wisdom in the thrust and parry of debate, strike out sparks of fire.

The famous American poem, "The Day of Doom," by Michael Wigglesworth—the best-known poem of Colonial times—has the same smack of brimstone found in "The Debate." The two poems are closely related in the fact that the hero in each case condemns God for the predestination that sends a soul to flaming perdition.

This crude and cruel idea of Hell persisted nearly everywhere down to the eighteenth century, when Emanuel Swedenborg—in his remarkable volume, "Heaven and Hell"—flung the light of reason upon this planetary darkness. He made it plain that hell-fire is evil desire. He made it plain that men—both here and hereafter—create their own miseries, their own perditions. It is reasonable to believe that men hereafter—as on earth—will gravitate to the places they are prepared to enjoy—the evil to the evil, the good to the good. In this we see the origin of all hells and of all heavens. There seems to be no arbitrary Power forcing men into perdition. In the light of this

<sup>1</sup> Modernized by Jessie L. Weston, with a few slight revisions by E. M.

## ANONYMOUS

*philosophy, a man goes to Hell because he wants to: he prefers it to Heaven. Hell is the heaven of the selfish.*

**I**T chanced, as on a winter's night,  
I drowsing lay, ere dawn of day,  
Methought I saw a wondrous sight—  
Upon a bier a Body lay,  
That erst had been a haughty knight,  
Who God would neither praise nor pray:  
Now was he reft of this life's light,  
His Spirit, freed, must hence away.

But ere that Spirit far would roam  
It turned, and, by the bier it stood,  
Beheld the Body, erst its home,  
In sorrowful and dreary mood:  
"Ah, wellaway!" it made its moan—  
"Woe worth thy flesh, woe worth thy blood,  
Thou wretched Body, now alone  
Dost lie, who wast so wild and wood!"<sup>1</sup>

"Thou that wast wont afield to ride,  
On warlike steed, 'mid courtly crowd,  
Of stature tall, in garment wide,  
Even as a lion fierce and proud,  
Where now is all thy mickle pride,  
Thy boastful speech, ere-while so loud?  
Thou liest bare, hast naught beside  
One garment poor, and that a shroud!

"Where be thy castles, where thy towers,  
Thy chambers and thy stately halls?  
Whose walls were painted fair with flowers?  
And where thy rich apparel all?

<sup>1</sup> wood, in those early times, meant mad.

## ANONYMOUS

Where be thy couches, where thy bowers?  
Thy sendals, and thy costly palls?  
Sorrow awaiteth thee as dower,  
With morn thy fate shall thee befall.

"Where now are all thy goodly weeds?  
The sumpter-mules that bare thy bed?  
Thy palfreys, and thy noble steeds,  
By hand of goodly pages led?  
The hawks that thou wast wont to feed?  
The hounds that swift behind thee sped?  
Methinks God bringeth thee to need  
Since all thy friends be from thee fled!

"Where be thy cooks who served thee well,  
And dainty meats did aye prepare,  
With fragrant spices sweet to smell?  
Methinks thou wast aye full of care  
To make that flesh with fatness swell  
Which now shall be the foul worm's fare.  
Henceforth, methinks, the pains of Hell,  
For gluttony shall be thy share!"

"To serve thee, Soul, was all my bent,  
Alike at even and at morn,  
Ever I sought for thy content,  
Even from the time that thou wast born:  
Thou who to judge my deeds wast lent,  
Why didst thou not thy comrade warn?  
Thou sawest me on folly bent,  
Now of thyself art thou forlorn!"

The Soul it quoth: "Body, lie still,  
Who now hath taught thee all this wit?  
Thou chidest me with words at will



## ANONYMOUS

Tho' swollen as by viper bit!  
Thinkest thou, wretch, that tho' thou fill  
With that foul flesh of thine a pit,  
Of all the deeds thou wrought of ill  
That thou so lightly shalt be quit?

"Thinkest thou peace with God to win  
When as thou liest low in clay?—  
Tho' thou be rotted bone and skin,  
And blown upon the blast away,  
Yet shalt thou come with joint and limb  
Again to me on Judgment Day;  
We twain to God's high court must win  
Together take our bitter pay!

"Whenas I thought to tame and teach  
Of what was ill and what was good,  
Of Christ and kirk would'st hear no speech,  
Didst start and shy, as wild and wood!  
Enow I then might pray and preach,  
But ne'er a jot might turn thy mood,  
To God thy knowledge ne'er might reach,  
Thou didst what in thy heart first stood."

The Body quoth: "Now this I say,  
Soul, thou hast done me wrong, I wis,  
When thou the blame on me dost lay  
That thou, thro' me, hast lost thy bliss.  
Where have I fared, by wood or way,  
Or sat, or stood, or wrought amiss,  
When I beyond thy glance did stray?  
Well dost thou know the truth of this!

"How might I know or wrong or right,  
What I should take, and what should shun,

## ANONYMOUS

Save thou didst set it in my sight,  
Thou who alone hadst wisdom won?  
If thou against my will didst fight,  
And bid me for misdeed make moan,  
Thereafter did I strive with might  
To do what pleased me alone!

"Soul, thou shouldst not for life nor land,  
Nor profit that thou here couldst win,  
Have suffered me to lend a hand  
To that which turns to shame or sin.  
But thou wast easy to withstand:  
Thy wit and wisdom, I found thin  
And yielding, even as hazel-wand:  
To mend I never might begin!

"To sin thou knewest I aye inclined,  
Forsooth with man 'tis ever so!  
On this poor world I set my mind,  
Followed the Fiend who is our foe.  
Thou should'st have striven my will to bind,  
When I mis-wrought have done me woe;  
As when the blind doth lead the blind  
We both in ditch are fallen low!"

But then the Soul 'gan weep full sore,  
And sighed "Ah, Body, Alas! Alas!  
My love I set on thee of yore  
Since all my pains *sans* profit pass!  
The Fiend of Hell, who e'er doth try  
To snare mankind, his plots he laid,  
Dwelt in us twain, methinks, as spy,  
When to good deeds I thee had prayed.

## ANONYMOUS

"And when I bade thee leave thy pride,  
Thy many meats, thy harness stout,  
The World stood ever at thy side  
And bade thee all my warnings flout,  
And garb thy Flesh in rich robes wide,  
Not as a beggar in a clout,  
And high on warlike steed to ride  
With knightly comrades in and out!

"Tho' all the men that be on life  
Were priests, and Mass for thee would sing,  
And every maid, and every wife,  
A widow, hands for grief to wring—  
And every one, methinks, were five,  
And in this world five-fold each thing,  
We never might hope ourselves to thrive,  
And none to bliss us twain might bring!

"Body, no longer may I dwell,  
Nor linger here to speak with thee:  
The hounds of Hell, I hear them yell,  
And devils, more than man may see:  
They come to carry me to Hell,  
I may in no wise from them flee:  
With flesh and bone, I rede thee well,  
At Doomsday shalt thou come to me!"

And scarce the Soul had spake this word,  
(Who wist right well where it must go)  
When in there rushed a hideous horde,  
Full thousand devils, all a-row.  
With talons sharp the Soul they clawed,  
In woe their grip it needs must know;  
A sorry sight it did afford  
Whenas they haled it to and fro.

## ANONYMOUS

For they were rugged, rough, and tailed,  
With hunches huge upon their back:  
Long were their claws, and sharply nailed,  
And never a limb such gear did lack!  
On all sides was the Soul assailed  
By many a devil, foul and black:  
Its prayers for mercy naught availed,  
For Christ his vengeance would not slack.

Then glowing glaves, methinks, they set  
To back, and breast, and to each side:  
The points, within his heart they met  
And made him wounds both deep and wide.  
They quoth: "Full well we'll plague thee yet,  
Thou heart that wast so full of pride:  
That which was promised shalt thou get,  
And more, and worse, shall thee betide!"

They said that goodly weeds to wear  
That were the thing he loved the best;  
In quenchless cope they robed him there,  
All burning bright—with mocking jest!  
With red-hot clasps that gleamed a-flare  
They fitted it to back and breast:  
A helmet that was none too fair  
Anon upon his head they prest.

Then forth they brought, with mickle pride,  
A cursèd devil, as a foal,  
That gnashed and gaped, with jaws full wide,  
Where-from both smoke and flame did roll.  
The saddle that he should bestride  
Of sharp pikes, pointed, bare its toll,  
Jagged as a hedge whereon to ride,  
And all was glowing as a coal!

## ANONYMOUS

Upon that saddle he was slung  
As one who should to Tourney fare,  
A hundred devils on him hung,  
And, ruthless, dragged him here and there.  
With fiery spears his flesh they stung;  
Anon with hooks they catch and tear:  
At every blow the sparks they sprung,  
As when men forge a red-hot share.

When to Hell's grisley goal they won  
The fiends, they set up such a yell,  
The earth, it opened wide anon;  
Smother and smoke thereout did well;  
With stench of pitch: and eke brimstone,  
Men five miles off might know the smell.  
Ah, Lord! That man is woe-begone  
Who to his share one tithe may tell!

But when the Soul had come so nigh  
And knew its goal, it cried in woe,  
And quoth: "Thou Christ, Who sit'st on high,  
Upon Thy sheep now mercy shew!  
Didst Thou not shape me, verily?  
Thy creature was I here below,  
Even as those souls who sit Thee nigh,  
To whom Thou dost such favor shew!

"Thou knowest all things, eve and morn,  
Why wrought'st Thou me for bale alway,  
That I should thus be tugged and torn,  
While others have such goodly pay?  
They that are doomed to be forlorn,  
Wretches Thou mightest cast away:  
Why dost thou let them ever be born  
To give the Fiend such goodly prey?"

## ANONYMOUS

The fiends against him clamoured high:  
"Wretch, it availeth thee no more  
To raise to Christ thy piteous cry  
Or Mary Mother to implore;  
For thou hast lost their company,  
Since thou hast served us well of yore:  
Thou needs must find such hostelry  
As those who well have learned our lore!"

The foul fiends all, as they were fain,  
Anon upon the soul they fell,  
And cast it down, with might and main,  
Into the deepest pit of Hell.  
The sun's light shall he seek in vain:  
Where he hath sunken must he dwell,  
The earth hath closed o'er him again,  
The dungeon gates are locked full well!

*(He who beheld that vision sore  
Lo! he speaketh somewhat more!)*

When they had borne that evil load  
Unto Hell's gates, ere dawn of day,  
On every hair a drop it stood  
For very dread as there I lay.  
To Jesus Christ, with humble mood,  
My soul it yearned, and fain would pray,  
As when the Foul Fiend's noisome brood  
Were come to carry me away!

I thanked Him Who His Blood did spill  
On Rood, and torment for us bore,  
Who shieldeth me from many an ill  
Which for my sins had lain in store.

## ANONYMOUS

All sinful souls I rede them still  
To shrive them, and do penance sore;  
Never may sin a measure fill  
But that Christ's mercy shall be more! ||

(Christ His Grace to him impart  
Who with hand this tale hath writ,  
That he serve with perfect heart  
Father, Son and Spirit!)

## WILLIAM LANGLAND

ENGLAND, 1330-1400?

A POEM "not only strange" but "likewise grand and beautiful" was written during the lifetime of Chaucer by a man concerning whose life we know only the scantiest facts, and those from the poem itself. Langland (if that was his name) affords contrast to his contemporary Chaucer in almost every particular.

Chaucer, for all his universality, had an audience of courtly readers. But Langland writes rather for the mass of the common folk, seeking the ear of men of good will; for the subject of his poem, *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, involves the social and religious condition of the poor in England during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II. He has no clever turns of phrase; all is blunt, straightforward, intended to enlighten, not to dazzle. Moreover, he is an intensely English poet; his insularity is in sharp contrast to Chaucer's admixture of ideas from other literatures. The melancholy of the Saxon is infused into the *Vision*, although it is the melancholy which broods but does not despair:

"For at the charnel house at the church it is hard to  
know churls,  
Or a knight from a knave there: know this in thy  
heart."

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Piers the Plowman is the name given by Langland to the reformer who was to bring in the new social era of justice, "the name to signify that great results can often be achieved by humble means; and perhaps as hinting, at the same time, that if the laboring classes were to expect any great improvement to take place in their condition, they had best consider what they could do to help themselves." Later, in the revised work, Piers the Plowman takes on a spiritual guise; the Plowman becomes the Good Samaritan, becomes the Saviour Himself.

There was a good deal of the Puritan in Langland; yet he was not so much averse to pleasures as to hypocrisy. His "fundamental indignation" is directed against shams. He hurls his contempts and curses against Fals-Semblant, the king who rules contrary to conscience—against the heartless man of law; the merchant without honesty; the friar, the pardoner, the hermit, who conceal, under the garment of saints, hearts that will rank them with the accursed ones. Fals-Semblant is the pope who sells benefices; also the histrion, the tumbler, the juggler, the adept of the vagrant race, who goes about telling tales and helping his listeners to forget the seriousness of life. "From the unworthy pope down to the lying juggler, all these men are the same man. Deceit stands before us; God's judgment be upon him!"

In the passage which is printed below, note the fashion of the lines, the rigid abstinence from rhyme, the inequality of length, and the middle pause which binds the measure. In the process of modernization it has been impossible for me to retain all the original accents and all the alliteration. Yet it is clear that however much the artistry of this verse may be inferior to Chaucer's, nevertheless the lines swing and sway along, and get over the ground.

This prologue opens the poem. In it the poet himself sees the vision of Heaven (the high tower) Hell (the deep dungeon) and Earth (the "fair field of folk"). The picture of the world which forms the substance of



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the extract has much verve and stir in it, with many effective satiric touches.

*From the Prologue of "The Vision of Piers  
the Plowman"*

*Modernized*

IN a summer season, when soft was the sun,  
I clad myself coarsely as I a shepherd were:  
In habit as an hermit unholy of works,  
Went I wide in this world wonders to hear.  
And on a May morning on Malvern Hills,  
Befell me a wonder of fairy, I thought.  
I was weary, far-wandered, and went me to rest  
Under a broad bank by a burn-side;  
And as I lay and leaned and looked on the waters,  
I slumbered into a sleeping, it sounded so merry.  
Then gan I to dream a wonderful dream  
That I wandered a wilderness, wist I never where.  
As I beheld into the East on high to the sun,  
I saw a tower on a hill-top, splendidly built,  
A deep dale beneath, a donjon therein,  
With deep ditches and dark, and dreadful of sight.  
A fair field full of folk I found there between,  
Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,  
Working and wandering as the world asketh.  
Some put them to the plough, and played full seldom,  
In setting and sowing they labored full hard,  
Winning what wasters with gluttony destroy.  
And some put them to pride, apparelled them there-  
after,  
In countenance of clothing strangely disguised.

## WILLIAM LANGLAND

To prayers and penances many applied them:  
All for the love of our Lord living full strictly,  
In hope to have hereafter heaven-kingdom bliss:  
As anchorites and hermits that keep in their cells  
And covet naught in the country to gad all about,  
By no luxurious living their body to please.  
And some chose to chaffer, their chances to better,  
For it seemed to my sight that such men most thrive;  
And some made mirth as minstrels are able,  
And got gold with their glee, guiltless, I deem them.  
But jesters and jugglers, Judas's children,  
Feigned them fantasies and made themselves fools,  
Yet have wit at will to work if they need.  
I dare not prove here that Paul of them preaches:  
For "Whoso speaks shameful speech" is Lucifer's hind.  
Beggars and petitioners right busily wandered,  
With their bellies and their bags of bread fully-  
crammed,  
Flattered for their food, fought at the ale-house.  
In gluttony, God wot, go they to bed,  
And rise with ribaldry, these Robert's knaves:<sup>1</sup>  
Sleep and sorry sloth pursue them forever.  
Pilgrims and palmers plighted them together  
For to seek Saint Jame and saints at Rome:  
They went forth on their way with many wise tales,  
And had leave to lie all their lives after.  
I saw some that said they had sought out the saints:  
In every tale told their tongues were trained to lie  
More than to say sooth, it seemed by their speech.  
Hermits in a crowd with hookèd staves  
Wended to Walsingham, and their wenches came after.  
Great lubbers and long that loath were to work  
Clothed them in copes to be counted as brethren  
And habited themselves hermits their ease for to have.

<sup>1</sup> vagabonds.

## WILLIAM LANGLAND

I found there the friars of all the four orders,  
Preaching to the people for profit of themselves:  
They glosed the gospel as seemed to them good;  
For covetousness of copes, they construed as they  
would.

Many of these masters now clothe them to their liking,  
For their money and merchandise marchen together.  
For since Charity has been chapman and chief in  
shriving lords,

Many marvels have befallen in a few years.  
There preached a pardoner<sup>1</sup> as if he were a priest,  
Brought forth a bull with many bishops' seals,  
And said that himself might absolve them all  
For breaking of fast-days and vows they had broken.  
Laymen loved it well and liked his words,  
Came up to him kneeling and kissed the bulls.  
He stopped their mouths with his brief and bleared  
their eyes

And gained with his register rings and brooches.  
Thus they give up their gold these gluttons to keep,  
And grant it to losels<sup>2</sup> as lechery hunt.  
Were the bishop y-blessèd and worth both his ears  
He would not send his seal for deceiving the people,  
Yet not against the bishop the pardoner preaches,  
But the parish priest and the pardoner part the silver  
That the poor of the parish would have, but for them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet hovered a hundred in coifs of silk,  
Serjeants, it seemed, that served at the bar  
And pleaded the law for pennies and pounds,  
But not once loose their lips for love of our Lord.

<sup>1</sup> a seller of Papal indulgences.

<sup>2</sup> worthless fellows.

WILLIAM LANGLAND

You might better measure mist on Malvern Hills  
Then get a mumble from their mouths until money be  
shown.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bakers and brewers and butchers a-many  
Websters of wool and websters of linen.  
Tailors and tinkers and toll-takers in markets,  
Masons and miners and many a craft.  
Of all sorts of laborers went about some,  
Such as ditchers and delvers that do their deeds ill  
And drag out the long day in "God save you, Dame  
Emma."<sup>1</sup>

Cooks and their knaves cried, "Hot pies, hot!  
Good geese and pigs! Come out to dine!"  
Taverners in turn with them shouted the song,  
"White wine of Alsace and red wine of Gascoigne,  
Wine of the Rhine and of Rochelle to wash down the  
roast!"

All this I saw sleeping, and seven times more.

<sup>1</sup> The refrain of a popular song.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

ENGLAND, 1340-1400

**I**N 1592, Robert Greene, a poet-contemporary of Shakespeare, pictured Chaucer in verse:

"His stature was not very tall;  
Lean he was; his legs were small,  
Hosed within a stock of red;  
A buttoned bonnet on his head,  
From under which did hang, I ween,  
Silver hairs both bright and sheen;  
His beard was white trimmèd round;  
His countenance blithe and merry found;  
A sleeveless jacket, large and wide,  
With many plaits and skirts beside,  
Of water-camlet did he wear;  
A whittle by his belt he bear;  
His shoes were cornèd, broad before;  
His ink-horn at his side he wore,  
And in his hand he bore a book—  
Thus did this ancient poet look."

Chaucer, the "father of English Songs", was at various times of his life a courtier, a student, a soldier, a diplomat, and a man of business. Probably no other poet of the first order ever led so active and varied a life. As John Dryden observed, in 1700: "Chaucer must have been a man of most wonderful comprehensive nature, because he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humors of the whole English nation of his time. Not a single character has escaped him, unless we except the aristocrats and the poverty-

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stricken ones. All his pilgrims are distinguished from one another, not only in their inclinations, but also in their very physiognomies and persons."

A century later, William Blake acclaimed Chaucer as "the great poetical observer of men, the man who in every age is born to record and eternize its acts." Yes, and Chaucer looked down on gentles and churls alike—sometimes with severity, but more often with a friendly and fatherly eye. He has little or none of the stern temper of Wyckliffe in religious radicalism, and little or none of the fiery indignation of Langland over social injustice.

Before the advent of Chaucer, Britain possessed an extensive literature, largely in verse; but this verse was a farrago of dialects, forms, treatments, with no sure aim or touch, no perspective view, and, above all, no self-critical control. In this vast welter moved lyric and allegory, realistic fable and visionary romance, moral preachment and lusty humor. This old poetry is not utterly lacking in glints of beauty, moments of grace and glamor. But there had been no commanding mind to harmonize and humanize the old chaotic forms and forces, to look on them shrewdly as a whole—no mind until Chaucer appeared.

He came dowered with the poetic mystery; and suddenly England thrilled with a new poetry that danced from heart to heart. He came with a new meter, a new rhythm, a new sense of the inevitable word, a new feeling for freshness and fluidity of phrase.

How did he use these powers to rescue the native language from a Babel of confusion, banish uncouth Anglo-Saxon terms, soften our tongue with words of Norman beauty? He used for this transformation the magic rod of characterization.

His tales have an undying interest for us only because they fling vividly forth the actions and passions of men and women known to us all. He has made live forever the knight, the squire, the clerk, the monk, the parson, the summoner, the prioress. At last we sense in literature

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the feel of life, the smack of the soil, the flavor of the common human experience.

How does Chaucer (how does any writer) give us this feel of life? By exciting in us strong feeling, feeling that gives us the freshness and hot impact of reality.

To give us this feeling, the writer must see persons and events in a warmly individual way. He avoids abstractions, making things strictly specific, severely concrete. He speaks of the thud of the ax, not of the sound of the ax. He speaks in terms of direct sensation.

There are stories in life all around us, but they are hidden by a mass of irrelevant detail. The writer must ignore this mass; and he must throw his character and his incident into a high light by choosing the suggestive detail, the dramatic and stirring fact. Thus the great writer makes us see things in sharp outline, in vivid individuality; and we come from his pages with a keen sense of the warmth and color of life.

We get the feel of this in Chaucer's oily-faced monk—in his yeoman, who is a forester and has "a head like a nut"—in his miller who is as brisk as the morning air—in his lipping friar who makes confession easy for the ladies—in his steward who shaves his beard as closely as he shaves the tenants of his master. We get the feel of it in this full length portrait of a monk in one line,

"Fat as a whale, and walkèd as a swan."

We get it in the opening lines of *The Parliament of Fowls*:

"The life so short, the craft so long to learn,  
The essay so hard, so sharp the conquering,  
The dreadful joys always that flit so yerne—  
All this I mean by love."

We get it in the pardoner telling of his way of preaching:

"Lordings," quoth he, "in churchë when I preach,  
I make a point to have a noisy speech,

•

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And ring it out as round as goes a bell,  
For I know all by rotè that I tell.  
My theme is always one, and ever was,  
*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I make point to stretchen forth my neck,  
And east and west upon the people I beck,  
As doth a dove sitting upon a barn."

As with Shakespeare, it is hard to decide whether Chaucer is greatest in humor or in pathos. When Griselda is told by her husband that she must return to her father to make room for her successor, she cries out:

"I never held me lady nor mistréss,  
But humble servant to your worthiness,  
And ever shall, while that my life may dure,  
Aboven every worldly créature.

\* \* \* \* \*

O goodè God! how gentle and how kind  
Ye seemèd by your speech and your viságe  
The day that makèd was our marriage!"

We also get the warmth of life in that cry of romantic love from the wistful lips of the waiting Troilus after his unfaithful Cressida had left him to go to Diomed in the Grecian camp:

"And every night as was his wont to do,  
He stood, the bright moon shining to behold,  
And all his sorrow to the moon he told,  
And said: 'Surely when thou art horned anew,  
I shall be glad—if *all the world be true!*'"

Chaucer is linked to the romantic age by his broad jokes, his occasional indelicacies of phrase, but especially by his gorgeous imagery as in the following:



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"There mayst thou see coming with Palamon  
Licurge himself, the greatë King of Thrace.  
Black was his beard and manly was his face:  
The circles of his eyen in his head  
They gloweden betwixten yellow and red,  
And like a griffon lookèd he about,  
With combèd hairës on his browës stout;  
His limbës great, his brawnës hard and strong,  
His shoulders broad, his armës round and long;  
And as the guisë was in his countree,  
Full high upon a car of gold stood he,  
With fourë whitë bullës in the trace.  
A hundred lordës had he in his rout  
Armèd full well, with heartës stern and stout.  
With Arcita, in stories as men find,  
The great Emetrius the King of Ind,  
Upon a steedë bay, trappèd in steel,  
Covered with cloth of gold diapered wele,  
Came riding like the god of Armës, Mars;  
His coat armor was of a cloth of Tars,  
Trimmed with pearlës white, and round, and great;  
His saddle was of burnt gold newly beat;  
A mantelet upon his shoulders hanging  
Brimful of rubies red, as fire sparkling;  
His crispë hair like ringës was yrun,  
And that was yellow, and glittered as the sun;  
His voice was as a trumpë thundering."

Chaucer drew his first inspiration from the French romance poetry, which in his early life was the chief reading in courtly circles. But after he had visited enchanting Italy, he took his models chiefly from that land of the nightingales. Yet it was the blithe Boccaccio that kindled his imagination, rather than the austere Dante or the sentimental Petrarch.

Chaucer was always a generous and genial borrower from other men's works. Yet he lent to whatever he borrowed a substance from his own imagination, which

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made the borrowed thing his own. He took from the old romances their fine extravagances, not their trivial and extraneous aspects. He snatched from the French stories their gayety and quiet commentary, rejecting their tedious features. He tempered the gay carelessness of the Italian stories with his English sobriety.

*The Canterbury Tales*, his later work, sums up the beauties and felicities of all his previous poems. Like his earlier work, these tales depend largely on bookish sources; but never did a poet write stories with less of the bookworm canker and more of the light and gust of open air. They have delighted the centuries.

It is chiefly in picturing this motley and immortal pilgrimage to Canterbury that Chaucer breaks from the old literary leanings to caste and class and becomes truly English and distinctly national. He is at last a keen catholic observer of the many-colored procession of life as it moves before his all-devouring eye.

While his characters are struck out sharply in clear light, his landscapes have not the freshness of later poets. Indeed, Theocritus, a thousand years earlier, surpasses him in this fresh feeling for nature.

Moralists—those who believe that artistic reserves help to preserve public decency—shrink from some of Chaucer's plain blunt speaking. Some of his merriment, at once hearty and sly, has the free speaking of his age. But he pleads that in all this he is forced to adjust the tale to the teller. In spite of his occasional coarseness, his sympathies are with virtue and nobility. His real delight is in the fun—not in the filth. He has indeed been called a moralist, although a happy and humorous one.

We see Chaucer mixing with all, understanding all, at home with all. While he loves manly hilarity and is ever ready to look with a tolerant eye on the mosaic of life, he still has a hot dislike of one thing—hypocrisy.

But Chaucer is lacking in one direction: he lacks the high seriousness of the great world poets, who are vibrant with the mighty hopes and dreams that make us men. He does not come with any interpretation of the enigma.

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He does not seem to sense any divine significance in this mortal struggle—does not stir us with any aspiration for a nobler order of life than earth supplies. He does not seem to see this world as the time-vesture of the Eternal. He never recognizes

“The voice mysterious, which whoso hears  
Must think on what will be and what has been.”

However, we can never forget how he brings back the springtide of our being and how he refines for us the passion of romantic love. We can never forget how—second only to Shakespeare—he holds up for our delight that fine mirror of human manners, and projects before us those vivid pictures of character that are imperishable.

### *Good Counseil of Chaucer*

*John Masefield says that the poetry of Chaucer—this poem in particular—opened his eyes to the fact that the office of the poet is “a holy one.” It was while Masefield was employed in a carpet factory in Yonkers, New York, that he happened upon a copy of Chaucer’s poems in a local bookstore. Until that time he had never thought seriously of writing poetry; but this chance contact with “the father of English song” changed the whole course of his life. Chaucer became his Bible.*

**F**LE fro the pres, and dwelle with sothfastnesse;  
Sufficē thee thy good, though hit be smal;  
For hord hath hate, and clymyng tikelnesse,<sup>1</sup>  
Pres hath envye, and wele blent over al.<sup>2</sup>  
Savour no more then thee behovē shal;  
Do wel thy-self that other folk canst rede,  
And trouthe thee shal delyver, hit ys no drede.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> insecurity.

<sup>2</sup> wealth everywhere blinds people.

<sup>3</sup> there is no doubt.

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Peynē thee not eche croked to redresse  
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal,<sup>1</sup>  
Gret restē stant in lytil besynesse;  
Bewar also to spurne ayein a nal,<sup>2</sup>  
Stryve not as doth a crokkē with a wal;<sup>3</sup>  
Dauntē thy-selfe that dauntest otheres dede,  
And trouthe thee shal delyver, hit ys no drede.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Fortune.      <sup>2</sup>an awl.      <sup>3</sup>i.e. as weak does with strong.

### *From the Prologue to "The Canterbury Tales"*

*Chaucer is the first great poet singing out of the misty morning of English song. He formed the matrix for our English language. He was the first molder of our heroic couplet, and the first poet to breathe into his verse the fragrance of the earth and the glow of the skies. Take this, for example:*

W HANNE that Aprille with his shoures sote  
The droughte of Marche hath percēd to  
the rote,  
And bathēd every veine in swiche licour,  
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour  
Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe  
Enspired hath in every holt and hethe  
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y ronne,  
And smale foules maken melodie,  
That slepen alle night with open eye,  
So priketh hem nature in her corages,  
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages.

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*You doubtless find this Middle English difficult reading; so I am giving you my own modernized versions. Although the spelling of Chaucer is here much modernized, a superfluous e is retained, because the rhythm requires that it should be pronounced. You will find in these versions nearly all "the smack and tang" of the original. Rejoice therefore in these passages from "The Prologue," which give glimpses of the procession of pilgrims telling tales to shorten the way, as they ride down the English lanes and highways to the old cathedral at Canterbury.*

WHEN that sweet April showers [with downward shoot]

The drouth of March has piercèd to the root,  
And bathèd every vein in such licoúr,  
Of which virtúe engendered is the flower;  
When Zephyrus also with his sweetë breath  
Inspirèd hath in every grove and heath  
The tender croppës, and the youngë sun  
Hath in the Ram one half his journey run,  
And smallë fowlës maken melody,  
That sleepen allë night with open eye;  
So pricketh them natúre in their coráges<sup>1</sup>  
Then longen folk to go on pilgrimáges,  
And palmers for to seeken strangë lands.

It fell, within that season on a day  
In Southwark, at the Tabard as I lay,  
Ready to wenden on my pilgrimáge  
To Canterbury with devout coráge,  
At night was come into that hostelry  
Well nine-and-twenty in a company,  
Of sundry folk who thus had chanced to fall  
In fellowship; and pilgrims were they all,

<sup>1</sup> hearts.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

That now to Canterbury wouldeñ ride.  
The chambers and the stables weren wide,  
And well we weren easèd at the best.\* \* \*

A knight there was, and that a worthy man,  
That from the timè that he first began  
To riden out, he lovèd chivalry,  
Truth and honór, freedóm and courtesy.\* \* \*  
He was of port as meek as is a maid,  
And never any villainy had said  
In all his life, to any sort of wight:  
He was a very perfect gentle knight.

With him there was his son, a youngè squire,  
A lover and a lusty bachelor:  
With lockès curled as they were laid in press.  
Of twenty years of age he was, I guess.  
Embroidered was he as it were a mead,  
All full of freshè flowers, white and red.  
Singíng was he, or fluting all the day:  
He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
Short was his gown, with sleevès long and wide;  
Well could he sit his horse, and fairè ride.  
He couldè songès make and well indite,  
Joust and eke dance, and well portray and write.  
So well he loved, that in the nightertale<sup>1</sup>  
He slept no more than doth the nightingale.  
Courteous he was, lowly and serviceable,  
And carved before his father at the table.

There was also a Nun, a Prioress  
That of her smiling was full simple and coy;  
Her greatest oath was but "by Saint Eloy";  
And she was callèd Madam Eglantine.

<sup>1</sup> night-time.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Full well she sang the servicë divine,  
Entuned in her nose full sweetly.  
At meat she was well mannerëd withal:  
She let no morsel from her lippës fall,  
Nor wet her fingers in her saucë deep:  
Well could she carry a morsel, and well keep,  
That no drop ever fall upon her breast.  
In courtesy was set full much her zest.  
Her over-lippë wipèd she so clean,  
That in her cup no particle was seen  
Of grease when she had drunken of her cup.  
Full seemëly her meat she lifted up;  
And of a truth she was of great disport,  
Pleasant to all and amiable of port.  
Yet she took pains to counterfeit the cheer  
Of court, and like a stately dame appear,  
And to be holden worth our reverence.  
But for to speaken of her consciëce,  
She was so charitable and so piteous  
She wouldë weep if that she saw a mouse  
Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.  
Of smallë houndës had she that she fed  
With roasted flesh and milk and fine white bread;  
But sore she wept if one of them were dead,  
Or if men smote it with a cudgel smart;  
And all was consciëce and tender heart.  
Full seemëly her wimple pinchèd was;  
Her nose was straight; her eyes were grey as glass;  
Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red;  
But certainly she had a fair foreheád.  
It was almost a spannë broad I trow,  
For certainly she was not undergrown.  
Full handsome was her cloak, as I was 'ware.  
Of small corál about her arm she bare  
A pair of bedës, gauded all with green;

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

And thereon hung a broach of gold full shene,  
On which was first writtén a crownèd A,  
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

A Monk there was, of skill and mastery proved;  
A bold one at a leap, who hunting loved;  
A manly man, to be an abbot able.  
Full many a dainty horse had he in stable;  
And when he rode, men might his bridle hear,  
Jingling in a whistling wind as clear,  
And eke as loud as doth the chapel bell,  
Where reigned he lord o'er many a holy cell.  
I saw his sleevës purfled at the hand  
With fur, and that the finest of the land.  
And for to keep his hood beneath his chin,  
He had of beaten gold a curious pin:  
A love-knot at the greater end there was.  
His head was bald, and shone as any glass;  
And eke his face, as it had been anoint:  
He was a lord full fat, and in good point.  
His eyes were deep, and rolling in his head,  
Which steamèd as a furnace melting lead;  
His bootës supple, his horse in great estate.  
Now certainly he was a fair prelâte.  
He was not pale as a poor pining ghost:  
A fat swan loved he best of any roast:  
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.

A Friar there was, a wanton and a merry;  
Licensed to beg, a wondrous solemn man.  
In all the orders four is none that can  
So much of dalliance and fair langage.  
Full many a marriage had he brought to bear  
For women young, and paid the cost with sport.  
Unto his order he was a rare support.



## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Full sweetly heard he confessiõ,  
And pleasant was his absoliõ.  
He was an easy man in penance naming,  
And knew that alms fell heavy from light blaming;<sup>1</sup>  
For unto a poor order for to give  
Is signē that a man is wellē shrive. \* \* \*  
For many a man so hard is of his heart,  
He will not weep, although he sorē smart;  
Therefore, instead of weeping and prayéres  
Men must give silver to the poor friars. \* \* \*  
Somewhat he lispèd for his wantonness  
To make his English sweet upon his tongue;  
And in his harping, when that he had sung,  
His eyen twinkled in his head aright,  
As do the starrēs in a frosty night.

A clerk there was of Oxenford also,  
Who unto logic had gone long ago.  
As skinny was his horse as is a rake;  
And the clerk was not right fat, I undertake.  
For he had got him yet no benefice,  
Nor was so worldly as to have office;  
For he would rather have at his bed's head  
A twenty bookēs, clad in black or red,  
Of Aristotle and his philosophy,  
Than robēs rich or fiddle or psaltéry.  
But all be that he was a philosópher,  
Yet had but little riches in his coffer,  
And all that might be by his friendēs lent,  
On bookēs and on learning he it spent;  
And busily began for souls to pray  
Of them that gave him wherewith to study.  
Of study took he mostē care and heed:

<sup>1</sup> Here in this modernized form we have a couplet that appears to me to be more sprightly and witty than the original.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Not a word spoke he morē than was need;  
And that was said in form and reverence,  
And short and quick, and full of high sentence.  
Sounding in moral virtue was his speech  
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

A sergeant of the law who much did know,  
And oft talkt law in St. Paul's portico,  
Was also there full rich in excellence.  
Discreet he was and of great reverence.  
He seemèd such his wordēs were so wise.  
Justice he often was in full assize.  
For his sciēcē and his high renown,  
Of fees and robēs had he many a one.\*\*\*  
Nowhere so busy a man as he there was;  
And yet he seemèd busier than he was.

A good man there was of religiōn,  
That was a poor PARSONĒ of a town;  
But rich he was in holy thought and work,  
He was also a learned man, a clerk,  
That Christē's gospel truēly would preach:  
His parishens devoutly would he teach,  
Benigne he was and wondrous diligent,  
And in adversity full patient:  
And such he was yprovèd often times:  
Full loth were he to cursen for his tithes.  
But rather would he given, out of doubt,  
Unto his poor parishioners about,  
Of his offering, and eke of his substānce;  
He could in little thing have suffisānce.  
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,  
But he nor felt nor thought of rain or thunder,  
In sickness and in mischief to visit

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

The farthest in his parish, much and oft,  
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.  
This noble example to his sheep he gave,  
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.  
Out of the Gospel he the wordës caught,  
And this figure he added yet thereto,  
That if gold rust, what sholdë iron do?  
And if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,  
No wonder if a common man do rust.  
Well ought a priest example for to give,  
By his cleannessë, how his sheep should live.  
He settë not his benefice to hire,  
Nor left his sheep bewildered in the mire,  
And ran unto Londón, unto Saint Paul's,  
To seeken him a chanterie for souls,  
Or with a brotherhood to be withhold;  
But dwelt at homë, and kept well his fold,  
So that the wolf no made it not miscarry.  
He was a shepherd and no mercenárie;  
And though he holy were, and virtuous,  
He was to sinful men not dispiteous,  
Nor of his speechë dangerous nor high,  
But in his teaching discrete and benigne.  
To drawen folk to Heaven, with fairëness,  
By good example, was his business.  
But if were any person obstinate,  
Whethér he were of high or low estate,  
Him would he réprove sharply for the nones:  
A better priest I trow that nowhere is.  
He waited on no pomp nor reverence,  
Nor makèd him no spicèd consciéce;  
But Christë's lore and his Apostles twelve  
He taught, but first he followed it himselve.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

### *The Friar's Tale*

*Slightly modernized by E. M.*

*A summoner, a church officer who cited offenders into the ecclesiastical court, once found himself riding in company with a devil, and made an agreement with him, which ended in a shock of surprise. The friars and the more dignified clergy—in Chaucer's time—were frequently at odds. Therefore it is a friar who relates the following amusing story, from which I have omitted only a negligible passage or two. I found it convenient in this version to mix the "thou" and the "you" forms, a procedure not inconsistent with the unsettled condition of English speech in the age of Chaucer. You will find "The Friar's Tale" sprinkled with the sly humor of the great poet. I hope that I have preserved in my version most, if not all, of the rich flavor of the original. Modernized versions of the Tales are now plentiful, yet usually they lack the quaintness of Chaucer's verse.*

AND so befell that once upon a day  
A summoner, waiting ever on his prey,  
Rode forth to summon a widow, an old ribbe,<sup>1</sup>  
Feigning a cause that he might have a bribe.  
And happened that he saw before him ride  
A gay yeoman under a forest side;  
A bow he bore, and arrows bright and keen.  
He had upon his back a cloak of green,  
And on his head a hat with fringes black.

"Sir", quoth the summoner, "hail, well overtake."  
"Welcome", quoth he, "and every good fellow.  
Where do you ride beneath this greenë shaw?<sup>2</sup>  
And is it that thou ridest far today?"

<sup>1</sup> A sharp-toned musical instrument: hence, a scolding woman.

<sup>2</sup> a thicket, a copse.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

The summoner him answered and said, "Nay,  
Here, fast by" (so he quoth) "is my intent  
To riden for to reisen up a rent  
Belonging to my lordës duëtee."

"Ah! are you then a bailiff?" "Yes", quoth he.  
(He durst not, for the very filth and shame,  
Say that he was a summoner, for the name.)  
"*Depardieux!*" cried this yeoman, "dear brother,  
You are a bailiff, and I am another.  
I am unknowèn here in this countrée:  
Of your acquaintance I will prayen thee,  
And eke of brotherhood, if that thee list.  
I have gold and silver lying in my chist:  
If you should hap to come into our shire,  
All shall be thine, right as you will desire."

"*Gramercy*", said this summoner, "by my faith!"  
Each in the other's hand his trothë laith,  
For to be swornë brethren till they die.  
In dalliance they riden forth and play.  
This summoner, who was as full of jangles  
As full of venime<sup>1</sup> are these wariangales,<sup>2</sup>  
And ever enquiring upon everything,  
"Brother", quoth he, "where now is your dwelling,  
Another day, if that I should you seek?"  
This yeoman answered him in softë speech:  
"Brother", quoth he, "far in the north countreé,  
Wherein I hope sometime I shall you see.  
Ere we depart, I shall you so well wisse,  
That of my house not shall you ever miss."  
"Now brother", quoth the summoner, "I pray,  
Teach me, while that we riden by the way,  
(Since that you are a bailiff as am I)  
Some subtlety, and tell me faithfully

<sup>1</sup> spites.

<sup>2</sup> woodpeckers.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

In my office how I may mostē win,  
And spare you not for consciēce or for sin,  
But, as my brother, tell me how do ye?"  
"Now, by my trothē, brother mine", said he,  
"As I shall tellen you a faithful tale,  
My wages are full strait and eke full smale.  
My lord is to me hard and dangerous,  
And my office is full laborious;  
And therefore by extortīon I live;  
Forsooth I take all that men will me give.  
At least by sleightē or by violence  
From year to year I win all my dispenœ.  
I can no better tellen faithfully."

"Now certes", quoth the summoner, "so fare I:  
I sparē not to take a thing, God wot,  
Unless it be too heavy or too hot.  
What I may get in counsel privily,  
No manner consciēce of that have I:  
Without extortīon I might not liven,  
Nor of such cheatings will I not be shriven.  
Stomach nor consciēcē know I none:  
I curse these shrifting fathers, every one.  
Well are we met, by God and by Saint Jame!  
But, lovèd brother, tellen me thy name."  
The summoner said. Right in this menē-while  
This yeoman gan a little for to smile.  
"Brother", quoth he, "wish you that I shall tell?  
I am a fiend: my dwelling is in Hell!  
And here I ride about my purchasing,<sup>1</sup>  
To learn where men will give me anything:  
My pickings are the source of all my rent.  
Look how thou ridest for the same intent:  
To winnen good, you reckon never how.

<sup>1</sup> pickings.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Right so fare I, for riden will I now  
Unto the worldës endë for a preyë”.

“God bless you”! cried the summoner: “what say ye?  
I thought you were a yeoman truëly:  
You have a mannës shape as well as I.  
Have you a figure then determinate  
In Hellë, where you are in your estate?”  
“Nay, certainly”, quoth he, “there have we none;  
But when us liketh we can take us one,  
Or ellës make you guess that we are shape  
Sometimë like a man, sometimë ape,  
Or like an angel can I ride or go:  
It is no wonder thing though it be so.  
A lousy jogelour can deceiven thee;  
And, pardee, yet know I more craft than he.”

“Why”, quoth the summoner, “ride ye then or run  
In sundry shapes, and not always in one?”  
“For we”, quoth he, “will us such formë make  
As most is able our preyë for to take.  
Sometime we feign and sometime we arise  
With deadë bodies in full sundry wise,  
And speak as reasonable and fair and well  
As to the Pythoness did Samuel;  
And yet indeed some say it was not he:  
I have no use for your divinity.  
But I warn you one thing: I will not jape:<sup>1</sup>  
You will, be sure, know how that we be shape.  
You shall hereafterward, my brother dear,  
Come where you do not need my words to hear.  
For you shall by your own experience  
Know how to preach in pulpit this sentënce,<sup>2</sup>  
Better than Virgil while he was alive,  
Or Dant also. Now let us riden blive,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> mock.

<sup>2</sup> subject for sermon.

<sup>3</sup> quickly.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

For I will holden company with thee  
Till it be so that thou forsakē me."

"Nay", quoth the summoner, "that shall not betide:  
I am a yeoman that is knowen full wide.  
My trothē will I hold to you, my brother,  
As I have sworn, and each of us to other,  
For to be truē brethren in this case,  
And both we go abouten our purchāse.<sup>1</sup>  
Takē you your part, what that men will thee give,  
And I shall mine: thus may we bothē live;  
And if that any of us have more than other,  
Let him be true and halve it with his brother."  
"I grant this", quoth the devil, "by my fay";  
And with that word they riden forth their way.

And right at entering of the townēs end,  
To which this summoner shaped him for to wend,  
They saw a cart that loaded was with hay,  
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.  
Deep was the mud; wherefore the cartē stood.  
The carter smote and cried as he were wood,<sup>2</sup>  
"Heit, Scot; heit, Brock; what, spare ye for the stones?  
The fiend" (quoth he) "may fetch you, body and bones  
As certainly as ever ye were foaled,  
So much of woe as I have with you tholed.<sup>3</sup>  
The devil have all, both horse and cart and hay."

The summoner said, "Here shall we have a prey."  
And near the fiend he drew, as nothing were,  
Full privily, and whispered in his ear:  
"Hearken, my brother, hearken, by thy faith:  
Do you not hear what thing the carter saith?  
Seize it anon, for he hath given it thee,

<sup>1</sup> pickings.

<sup>2</sup> mad.

<sup>3</sup> endured.



## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Both hay and cart, and eke his horses three."  
"Nay", quoth the devil, "God wot, never a bit!  
It is not his intent, trust me for it.  
Axe him yourself, if you do not trust me,  
Or ellës wait awhile, and you shall see."

This carter thwacked his horses on the croup,  
And they began to drawen and to stoop.  
"Heit now", quoth he, "there, Jesus Christ you bless,  
And all his handiwork, both more and less!  
That was well pulled, my owën Liard, boy.  
I pray God save your body and Saint Eloy.  
Now is my cart out of the slough, pardee."

"Lo, brother", quoth the fiend, "what told I thee?  
Here may you see, my owën dear brothér,  
The churl spoke one thing, but he thought another.  
Let us go forth abouten our voyáge:  
Here win I nothing upon this cariáge."<sup>1</sup>

When they had comen somewhat out of town,  
This summoner to his brother gan to rounne:<sup>2</sup>  
"Brother", quoth he, "here dwelleth an old rebekke,<sup>3</sup>  
That had almost as lief to lose her neck  
As for to give a penny of her good.  
I will have twelve-pence though that she be wood,<sup>4</sup>  
Or I will summon her to our office;  
And yet, God wot, of her I know no vice.  
But if you cannot here in this countrée  
Winnen thy costs, take here example of me."

The summoner clappeth at the widow's gate:  
"Come out", he said, "you oldë reprobate:  
I trow you have some friar or priest with thee."

<sup>1</sup> direction.

<sup>2</sup> whisper.

<sup>3</sup> same as ribibe, a sharp-tongued woman.

<sup>4</sup> mad.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

"Who clappeth?", said this wife, "*benedicite!*  
God save you, sir, what is your sweetë will?"

"I have", quoth he, "of summons here a bill:  
On pain of cursing, lookë that you be  
Tomorrow before the archëdeacon's knee,  
To answer to the court of certain things."  
"Now, Lord", quoth she, "Christ Jesus, King of kings,  
So help me verily, I never may:  
I have been sick, and that full many a day.  
I may not go so far", quoth she, "nor ride  
But I be dead, so pricketh it my side.  
May I not axe the libel, Sir Summoner,  
And answer there by my procúlator  
To any thing men would apposen me?"

"Yes", quoth the summoner, "pay anon: let's see—  
Twelve pence to me, and I will give acquittal:  
I shall no profit have thereby but little:  
My master has the profit, and not I.  
Come off, and let me riden hastily:  
Give me twelve pence: I may no longer tarry."  
"Twelve pence"! cried she. "Now Lady Saintë Mary  
So safely help me out of care and sin,  
This widë world though that I should it win,  
I no have not twelve pence within my hold.  
You knowen well that I am poor and old:  
Bestow your alms on me, a poorë wretch."

"Nay then", quoth he, "the foulë fiend me fetch  
If I excuse thee, though thou shouldst be spilt."  
"Alas", quoth she, "God wot I have no guilt."

"Pay me", quoth he, "or by the sweet Saint Anne  
Carry I will away your newë pan

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

For debtē which thou owest me of old,  
When that thou madest thy husband cuckēold,  
I paid at home for thy correction."

"Thou liest", cried she, "by my salvation:  
Not was I never or now, widow or wife,  
Summoned into your court in all my life,  
And never I was but of my body true.  
Unto the devil, rough and black of hue,  
Give I your body and my pan also!"

And when the devil heard her cursen so  
Upon her knees, he said in this mannér:  
"Now, Mabily, my owēn modder dear,  
Is this your will in earnest that you say?"  
"The devil", quoth she, "fetch him before he die,  
And pan and all, if he will not repent."

"Nay, old weasél, that is not my intent",  
The summoner said, "for to repenten me  
For anything that I have had of thee:  
I would I had thy smock and all thy cloth."

"Now, brother", quoth the devil, "be not wroth:  
Your body and this pan are mine by right.  
You shall go into Hell with me tonight,  
Where you will knowen of our privity  
More than a master of divinity."

And with that word the foulē fiend him hent<sup>1</sup>  
Body and soul: he with the devil went  
Wherē these summoners have their heritage.

<sup>1</sup> seized.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

*Death and the Ruffians*

BEING "THE PARDONER'S TALE"

*Modernized by Leigh Hunt*

*Three drunken ruffians, madly believing Death to be an embodied person, go out to kill him. They meet him in the shape of an old man, who tells them where Death is to be found; and they find him accordingly.*

IN Flanders there was once a desperate set  
Of three young spendthrifts, fierce with drink  
and debt,  
Who, haunting every sink of foul repute,  
And giddy with the din of harp and lute,  
Went dancing and sat gambling day and night,  
And swilled and gorged beyond their natures' might,  
And thus upon the devil's own altar laid  
The bodies and the souls that God had made.

So horribly they swore with every word,  
They seemed to think the Jews had spared our Lord,  
That rent his body; and the worse they swore,  
And scoffed, and sinned, they did but laugh the more.

Their doors were ever turning on the pin  
To let their timbrellers and tumblers in,  
Sellers of cakes and such-like—every one  
A devil's own help to see his business done,  
And blow up fires, far better, Sirs, made less,  
Out of the accursed fuel of excess.

These wretches, having lost one night at play,  
Were drinking still by the sad dawn of day,

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

When hearing a bell go for some one dead,  
They cursed, and called the vintner's boy, and said,  
"Who's he that has been made cold meat to-night?  
Ask the fool's name, and see you bring it right."

The boy who had been sick, and in whose head  
Something had put strange and grave matter, said,  
"Nay, Sirs, 'twas Hob, the smith. You knew him well;  
A big-mouthed, red-haired man; you called him Hell.  
Last evening he was sitting, bolt upright,  
Too drunk to speak, when in there came a wight  
Whom men call *Death*, that slayeth high and low;  
And with his staff Death felled him at a blow;  
And so, without one word, betook him hence.  
He hath slain heaps during the pestilence.  
And, Sirs, they say, the boldest man had best  
Beware how he invites so grim a guest,  
Or be prepared to meet him, night and day.  
'Tis what, long since, I've heard my mother say."

"Ay", quoth the vintner, "every word you hear  
Is true as gospel. He hath slain this year,  
And barely with his presence, half the place.  
God grant we meet not with his dreadful face."

"God grant a fig's end", exclaimed one. "Who's he  
Goes blasting thus fools' eyes? Let's forth, we three,  
And hunt him out, and punch the musty breath  
Out of his bones, and be the death of Death."

'Twixt rage and liquor staggering forth they flung,  
And on their impious oaths their changes rung;  
And then would pause, and gathering all the breath  
Their shouts had left them, cry out, "Death to Death"!

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

They had not gone a furlong, when they met,  
Beside a bridge that crossed a rivulet,  
A poor old man, who meekly gave them way,  
And bowed, and said, "God save ye, Sirs, I pray."

The foremost swaggerer, prouder for the bow,  
Said, "Well, old crawler, what art canting now?  
Why art thou thus wrapped up, all save thy face?  
Why liv'st so long, in such a sorry case?"

The old man began looking steadfastly  
Into the speaker's visage, eye to eye,  
And said, "Because I cannot find the man,  
Nor could, though I had walked since time began,  
No, not the poorest man, nor the least sage,  
Who would exchange his youth for mine old age;  
And therefore must I keep mine old age still,  
As long as it shall please the Almighty's will.  
Death will not rid me of this aching breast;  
And thus I walk, because I cannot rest,  
And on the ground, my mother Nature's gate,  
I knock with mine old staff, early and late,  
And say to her: Dear mother, let me in.  
Lo! how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin.  
When shall I sleep for good? Oh, mother dear,  
The coffin which has stood this many a year  
By my bedside, full gladly would I give  
For a bare shroud, so I might cease to live;  
And yet she will not do me, Sirs, that grace,  
For which full pale and wrinkled is my face.

"But, Sirs, in you it is no courtesy  
To mock an old man, whosoe'er he be,  
Much less a harmless man in deed and word.  
The Scripture, as in church ye may have heard,

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Saith, 'To an old man, hoar upon his head,  
Ye shall bow down'. Therefore let this be said  
By poor me now—Unto an old man do  
Nought which in age ye'd not have done to you.  
And so God guard ye, Sirs, in weal or woe.  
I must go onward, where I have to go."

"Nay", t'other cried, "Old Would-be Dead and Gone,  
Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.  
Thou spak'st but now of that false villain Death,  
Who stoppeth here a world of honest breath:  
Where doth he bide? Tell us, or by the Lord  
And Judas, and the jump in hempen cord,  
As surely as thou art his knave and spy,  
We'll hang thee out, for thine old rheums to dry.  
Thou art his privy nipper, thou old thief,  
Blighting and blasting all in the green leaf."

"Sirs", quoth the old man, "spare, I pray, your breaths:  
Death ye would find, and this your road is Death's.  
Ye see yon spread of oaks, down by the brook;  
There doth he lie, sunned in a flowery nook."

Death sunning in a flowery nook! How flies  
Each drunkard o'er the sward, to smite him as he lies!

They reach the nook: and what behold they there!  
No Death, but yet a sight to make them stare;  
To make them stare, not out of mortal dread,  
But only for huge bliss and stounded head;  
To wit, poured forth, countless and deep and broad,  
As if some cart had there discharged its load,  
A bank of florins of fine gold—all bright,  
Fresh from the mint, plump, ponderous. What a sight!  
They laughed, they leapt, they flung to earth, and rolled  
Their souls and bodies in the glorious gold:

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

And then they sat and communed; and the worst  
Of all the three was he that spoke the first.

"God's life"! quoth he: "here's treasure! here's a day!  
Hush—look about. Now hark to what I say.  
This store that luck hath sent us, boys—ho! ho!  
As freely as it came, shall it not go?  
By God, it shall; and precious nights we'll spend.  
Who thought friend Death would make so good an end?  
This is a wizard's work, to escape us, hey?  
No matter. 'Tis hard gold, and well shall pay.  
But how to store it, Sirs, to get it housed?  
Help must be shunned. Men's marvel would be roused.  
Wherefore I hold that we draw lots, and he  
To whom it falls betake him suddenly  
To town, and bring us victuals here, and wine,  
Two keeping watch till all the three can dine;  
And then at night we'll get us spades, and here,  
In its own ground, the gold shall disappear."

The lots are drawn, the youngest thief sets off;  
And then the first, after a little cough,  
Resumed—"I say—we two are of one mind;  
Thou know'st it well; and *he* but a mean hind.  
'Twas always so. We were the merry men,  
And he the churl and sot. Well, mark me then.  
This heap of money, ravishing to see,  
The fool supposes, must be shared by three.  
But—hey? Just so. You think, as wise men do,  
That three men's shares are better shared by two."

"Yet how"? said t'other.

"How"! said he: "'tis done  
As easily as counting two to one.  
He sitteth down: thou risest as in jest,



## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

And while thou tumblest with him, breast to breast,  
I draw my dirk, and thrust him in the side:  
Thine follows mine; and then we two divide  
The lovely gold. What say'st thou, dearest friend?  
Lord! of our lusty life were seen no end."

The bond was made. The journeyer to the town  
Meantime had in his heart rolled up and down  
The beauty of the florins, hard and bright.  
"Christ Lord"! thought he, "what if I had the right  
To all this treasure, my own self alone!  
There's not a living man beneath the throne  
Of God that should be half so blest as I."  
And thus he pondered, till the Enemy,  
The Fiend, who found his nature nothing loth,  
Whispered him, "Poison them. They're villains both.  
Always they cheat thee; sometimes beat thee; oft  
Carp at thy brains. Prove now whose brains are soft."

With speed a shop he seeketh, where is sold  
Poison for vermin; and a tale hath told  
Of rats and polecats that molest his fowl.  
"Sir", quoth the shopman, "God so guard my soul,  
But thou shalt have a drug so pure and strong  
To slay the knaves that do thy poultry wrong,  
That were the hugest creature on God's earth  
To taste it, stricken would be all his mirth  
From out his heart, and life from out his sense,  
Ere he could drag his body a mile hence."

The cursed wretch, too happy to delay,  
Grasping the box of poison, takes his way  
To the next street, and buys three flasks of wine.  
Two he drugs well against his friends shall dine,  
And with a mark secures the harmless one,

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

To drink at night-time till his work be done;  
For all that night he looks to have no sleep,  
So well he means to hide his golden heap.  
And thus thrice armed, and full of murderous glee,  
Back to the murderous two returneth he.

What needeth more? for even as their plan  
Had shaped his death, right so hath died the man;  
And even as the flasks in train were set,  
His heirs and scorners fall into his net.

"Ace thrown", quoth one, smiling a smile full grim;  
"Now for his wine, and then we'll bury him."

And seizing the two flasks, each held his breath  
With eyes to heaven, and deep he drank his death.

### *A St. Valentine Rondel*

*Slightly modernized by E. M.*

NOW welcome summer with thy sonnë soft,  
That hast this winter tempest over-shake,  
And driven away the longë nightës black.

Saint Valentine, that art full high a-loft,  
Thus singen smalë fowlës for thy sake:  
"Now welcome summer with thy sonnë soft,  
That hast this winter tempest over-shake."

Well have they causë for to gladden oft,  
Since each of them recovered both his mate:  
Full blissful may they singen when they wake:  
"Now welcome summer with thy sonnë soft,  
That hast this winter tempest over-shake,  
And driven away the longë nightës black."

ANONYMOUS

SCOTLAND

*Sir Patrick Spens*

I. THE SAILING

THE king sits in Dunfermline town  
Drinking the blude-red wine:  
"O whare will I get a skeely<sup>1</sup> skipper  
To sail this new ship o' mine?"

O up and spak an eldern knight,  
Sat at the king's right knee:  
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor  
That ever sailed the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter,  
And sealed it with his hand,  
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,  
Was walking on the strand.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,  
To Noroway over the faem;  
The king's daughter o' Noroway,  
'Tis thou must bring her hame."

The first word that Sir Patrick read  
So loud, loud laughed he;  
The neist word that Sir Patrick read  
The tear blinded his e'e.

<sup>1</sup> skilfu!

## ANONYMOUS

"O wha is this has done this deed  
And tauld the king o' me,  
To send us out, at this time o' year,  
To sail upon the sea?

"Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,  
Our ship must sail the faem;  
The king's daughter o' Noroway,  
'Tis we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn  
Wi' a' the speed they may;  
They hae landed in Noroway  
Upon a Wodensday.

## II. THE RETURN

"Mak ready, mak ready, my merry men a'l  
Our gude ship sails the morn."  
"Now ever alack, my master dear,  
I fear a deadly storm.

"I saw the new moon late yestreen  
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;  
And if we gang to sea, master,  
I fear we'll come to harm."

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,  
A league but barely three,  
When the lift<sup>1</sup> grew dark, and the wind blew loud,  
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the topmast sprang,  
It was sic a deadly storm;

<sup>1</sup> sky.

ANONYMOUS

And the waves cam owre the broken ship  
Till a' her sides were torn.

"Go fetch a web o' the silken clath,  
Another o' the twine,  
And wap them into our ship's side,  
And let nae the sea come in."

They fetched a web o' the silken clath,  
Another o' the twine,  
And they wrapped them round that gude ship's side,  
But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith were our gude Scots lords  
To wet their cork-heeled shoon;  
But lang or a' the play was played  
They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed  
That flattered<sup>1</sup> on the faem;  
And mony was the gude lord's son  
That never mair cam hame.

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,  
Wi' their fans into their hand,  
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens  
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit  
Wi' their gowd kames<sup>2</sup> in their hair,  
A-waiting for their ain dear loves!  
For them they'll see nae mair.

<sup>1</sup> tossed afloat.

<sup>2</sup> combs.

ANONYMOUS

Half-owre, half-owre to Aberdour,  
'Tis fifty fathoms deep;  
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,  
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet!

ANONYMOUS

SCOTLAND

*Clerk Saunders*

**C**LERK SAUNDERS and may Margaret  
Walked owre yon garden green;  
And deep and heavy was the love  
That fell thir twa between.

"A bed, a bed," Clerk Saunders said,  
"A bed for you and me!"  
"Fye na, fye na," said may Margaret,  
"Till anes we married be!"

"Then I'll take the sword frae my scabbard  
And slowly lift the pin;  
And you may swear, and save your aith,  
Ye ne'er let Clerk Saunders in.

"Take you a napkin in your hand,  
And tie up baith your bonnie e'en,  
And you may swear, and save your aith,  
Ye saw me na since late yestreen."

## ANONYMOUS

It was about the midnight hour,  
When they asleep were laid,  
When in and came her seven brothers,  
Wi' torches burning red—

When in and came her seven brothers,  
Wi' torches burning bright:  
They said, "We hae but one sister,  
And behold her lying with a knight!"

Then out and spake the first o' them,  
"I bear the sword shall gar him die."  
And out and spake the second o' them,  
"His father has nae mair but he."

And out and spake the third o' them,  
"I wot that they are lovers dear."  
And out and spake the fourth o' them,  
"They hae been in love this mony a year."

Then out and spake the fifth o' them,  
"It were great sin true love to twain."  
And out and spake the sixth o' them,  
"It were shame to slay a sleeping man."

Then up and gat the seventh o' them,  
And never a word spake he;  
But he has thrust his bright brown brand  
Out through Clerk Saunders' fair bodye.

Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turned  
Into his arms as asleep she lay;  
And sad and silent was the night  
That was atween thir twae.

## ANONYMOUS

And they lay still and sleepit sound  
Until the day began to daw';  
And kindly she to him did say,  
"It is time, true love, you were awa'."

But he lay still, and sleepit sound,  
Albeit the sun began to sheen;  
She look'd atween her and the wa',  
And dull and drowsie were his e'en.

Then in and came her father dear;  
Said, "Let a' your mourning be;  
I'll carry the dead corse to the clay,  
And I'll come back and comfort thee."

"Comfort weel your seven sons,  
For comforted I will never be:  
I ween 'twas neither knave nor loon  
Was in the bower last night wi' me."

The clinking bell gaed through the town,  
To carry the dead corse to the clay;  
And Clerk Saunders stood at may Margaret's window,  
I wot, an hour before the day.

"Are ye sleeping, Marg'ret?" he says,  
"Or are ye waking presentlie?  
Give me my faith and troth again,  
I wot, true love, I gied to thee."

"Your faith and troth ye sall never get,  
Nor our true love sall never twin,  
Until ye come within my bower,  
And kiss me cheik and chin."



## ANONYMOUS

"My mouth it is full cold, Marg'ret;  
It has the smell, now, of the ground;  
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,  
Thy days of life will not be lang.

"O cocks are crowing a merry midnight;  
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;  
Give me my faith and troth again,  
And let me fare me on my way."

"Thy faith and troth thou sallna get,  
And our true love sall never twin,<sup>1</sup>  
Until ye tell what comes o' women,  
I wot, who die in strong traivelling?"

"Their beds are made in the Heavens high,  
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,  
Weel set about wi' gillyflowers;  
I wot, sweet company for to see.

"O cocks are crowing a merry midnight;  
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;  
The psalms of Heaven will soon be sung,  
And I, ere now, will be missed away."

Then she has taken a crystal wand,  
And she has stroken her troth thereon:  
She has given it him out at the shot-window,  
Wi' mony a sad sigh and heavy groan.

"I thank ye, Marg'ret; I thank ye, Marg'ret;  
And ay I thank ye heartilie:  
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,  
Be sure, Marg'ret I'll come for thee."

<sup>1</sup> break in two.

## ANONYMOUS

It's hosen and shoon, and gown alone,  
She climbed the wall, and followed him,  
Until she came to the green forest,  
And there she lost the sight o' him.

"Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?  
Is there ony room at your feet?  
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,  
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep?"

"There's nae room at my head, Marg'ret,  
There's nae room at my feet:  
My bed it is fu' lowly now,  
Amang the hungry worms I sleep.

"Cauld mould is my covering now,  
But and my winding-sheet:  
The dew it falls nae sooner down  
Than my resting-place is weet.

"But plait a wand o' bonny birk,  
And lay it on my breast;  
And shed a tear upon my grave,  
And wish my saul gude rest."

Then up and crew the red, red cock,  
And up and crew the gray:  
"'Tis time, 'tis time, my dear Marg'ret,  
That you were going away.

"And fair Marg'ret, and rare Marg'ret,  
And Marg'ret o' veritie,  
Gin ever ye love another man,  
Never love him as ye did me."

ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND

*The Three Ravens*

THERE were three ravens sat on a tree,  
They were as black as they might be.

The one of them said to his make,<sup>1</sup>  
"Where shall we our breakfast take?"

"Down in yonder greenë field  
There lies a knight slain under his shield;

"His hounds they lie down at his feet,  
So well do they their master keep;

"His hawks they flie so eagerly,  
There's no fowl dare come him nigh.

"Down there comes a fallow doe  
As great with young as she might goe.

"She lift up his bloody head  
And kist his wounds that were so red.

"She gat him up upon her back  
And carried him to earthen lake.

"She buried him before the prime,  
She was dead herself ere evensong time.

"God send every gentleman  
Such hounds, such hawks, and such a leman."

<sup>1</sup> mate.

ANONYMOUS

*The Twa Corbies*

(*Scottish Version*)

AS I was walking all alane  
I heard twa corbies<sup>2</sup> making a mane:  
The tane unto the tither did say,  
“Whar sall we gang and dine the day?”—

“In behint yon auld fail dyke  
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;  
And naebody kens that he lies there  
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

“His hound is to the hunting gane,  
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,  
His lady’s ta’en anither mate,  
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

“Ye’ll sit on his white hause-bane,  
And I’ll pike out his bonny blue e’en:  
Wi’ ae lock o’ his gowden hair  
We’ll theek our nest when it growes bare.

“Mony a one for him maks mane,  
But nane sall ken whar he is gane:  
O’er his white banes, when they are bare,  
The wind sall blaw for evermair.”

<sup>2</sup> ravens.

ANONYMOUS

SCOTLAND

*Helen of Kirconnell*

I WISH I were where Hèlen lies—  
Night and day on me she cries;  
O that I were where Helen lies  
On fair Kirconnell lea!

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,  
And curst the hand that fired the shot,  
When in my arms burd Helen dropped,  
And died to succour me!

O think na ye my heart was sair,  
When my Love dropped and spak nae mair!  
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,  
On fair Kirconnell lea.

As I went down the water side,  
None but my foe to be my guide,  
None but my foe to be my guide,  
On fair Kirconnell lea,

I lighted down my sword to draw,  
I hackèd him in pieces sma',  
I hackèd him in pieces sma',  
For her sake that died for me.

## ANONYMOUS

O Helen fair, beyond compare!  
I'll mak a garland o' thy hair,  
Shall bind my heart for evermair,  
Until the day I die!

O that I were where Helen lies!  
Night and day on me she cries:  
Out of my bed she bids me rise,  
Says, 'Haste, and come to me!'

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!  
If I were with thee, I'd be blest,  
Where thou lies low and taks thy rest,  
On fair Kirconnell lea.

I wish my grave were growing green,  
A winding-sheet drawn owre my e'en,  
And I in Helen's arms lying,  
On fair Kirconnell lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies!  
Night and day on me she cries;  
And I am weary of the skies,  
For her sake that died for me.

ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND, 15TH CENTURY

*Lyke-Wake Dirge*

*This dirge was written to be chanted at night beside the body of one dead. We do not know the author of it, nor the precise period. The poem tells of the journey of the "saule" or spirit of the body which lies in its shroud. The salt mentioned in the first stanza is that which was placed in a platter beside the body—earth being the symbol of corruption, salt of deathlessness. "Whinnies" means gorse.*

*Five centuries after this poem was written, Joaquin Miller condensed the idea of it into his famous epigram:*

*"All you can hold in your cold dead hand  
Is what you have given away."*

THIS ae nighte, this ae nighte,  
Every nighte and alle,  
Fire and salt and candle-lighte,  
And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,  
Every nighte and alle,  
To Whinny-muir thou comest at last;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,  
Every nighte and alle,  
Sit thee down and put them on;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

## ANONYMOUS

If hosen and shoon thou never gav'st nane,  
Every nighte and alle,  
The whinnes sall prick thee to the bare bane;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Whinny-muir that thou mays't pass,  
Every nighte and alle,  
To Brig o' Dread thou comest at last;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Brig o' Dread that thou mays't pass,  
Every nighte and alle,  
To Purgatory fire thou comest at last;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,  
Every nighte and alle,  
The fire sall never make thee shrink;  
And Christe receive thy saule.

If meat and drink thou never gav'st nane,  
Every nighte and alle,  
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane,  
And Christe receive thy saule.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,  
Every nighte and alle,  
Fire and salt and candle-lighte;  
And Christe receive thy saule.



ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND, ABOUT 15TH CENTURY

*Western Wind*

WESTERN wind, when wilt thou blow?  
The small rain down can rain.  
Christ, if my Love were in my arms  
And I in my bed again!

ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND, ABOUT 15TH CENTURY

*A Carol of Mother Mary*  
*Modernized*

I SING of a maiden  
That is matchless:  
King of all kings  
For her son she chose.  
He came al so stille  
Where his mother was,  
As dew in Aprille  
That falleth on the grass.  
He came al so stille  
To his mother's bower,

ANONYMOUS

As dew in Aprille  
That falleth on the floure.  
He came al so stille  
Where his mother lay,  
As dew in Aprille  
That falleth on the spray.  
Mother and maiden  
Was never none but she:  
Well may such a lady  
God's mother be.

ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND

*Phillada Flouts Me*

O WHAT a plague is love!  
How shall I bear it?  
She will inconstant prove,  
I greatly fear it.  
She so torments my mind  
That my strength faileth,  
And wavers with the wind  
As a ship saileth.  
Please her the best I may,  
She loves still to gainsay;  
Alack and well-a-day!  
Phillada flouts me.

## ANONYMOUS

At the Fair yesterday  
She did pass by me;  
She looked another way  
And would not spy me:  
I wooed her for to dine,  
But could not get her;  
Will had her to the wine—  
He might entreat her.  
With Daniel she did dance,  
On me she looked askance:  
O thrice unhappy chance!  
Phillada flouts me.

Fair maid, be not so coy,  
Do not disdain me!  
I am my mother's joy:  
Sweet, entertain me!  
She'll give me, when she dies,  
All that is fitting—  
Her poultry and her bees,  
And her goose sitting,  
A pair of mattress beds,  
And a bag full of shreds;  
And yet, for all this gudes,<sup>1</sup>  
Phillada flouts me!

She hath a clout of mine  
Wrought with blue coventry,  
Which she keeps for a sign  
Of my fidelity—  
But i' faith, if she flinch  
She shall not wear it:  
To Tib, my t'other wench,  
I mean to bear it.

<sup>1</sup> goods, property of any kind.

## ANONYMOUS

And yet it grieves my heart  
So soon from her to part:  
Death strike me with his dart.  
Phillada flouts me.

Thou shalt eat crudded cream  
All the year lasting,  
And drink the crystal stream  
Pleasant in tasting:  
Whig and whey whilst thou lust,  
And bramble-berries,  
Pie-lid and pastry-crust,  
Pears, plums, and cherries.  
Thy raiment shall be thin,  
Made of a weevil's skin;  
Yet all's not worth a pin!  
Phillada flouts me.

In the last month of May  
I made her posies:  
I heard her often say  
That she loved roses.  
Cowslips and gillyflowers  
And the white lily  
I brought to deck the bowers  
For my sweet Philly.  
But she did all disdain,  
And threw them back again;  
Therefore 'tis flat and plain  
Phillada flouts me.

Fair maiden, have a care,  
And in time take me:  
I can have those as fair  
If you forsake me;

## ANONYMOUS

For Doll the dairy-maid  
    Laughed at me lately,  
And wanton Winifred  
    Favors me greatly.  
One throws milk on my clothes,  
T'other plays with my nose;  
What wanting signs are those?  
    Phillada flouts me.

I cannot work nor sleep  
    At all in season:  
Love wounds my heart so deep  
    Without all reason.  
I 'gin to pine away  
    In my Love's shadow,  
Like as a fat beast may,  
    Penned in a meadow.  
I shall be dead, I fear,  
Within this thousand year:  
And all for that my dear  
    Phillada flouts me.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND

*Barbara Allen's Cruelty*

**I**N Scarlet town, where I was born,  
There was a fair maid dwellin',  
Made every youth cry *Well-a-way!*  
Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,  
When green buds they were swellin',  
Young Jemmy Grove on his death-bed lay,  
For love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his man in to her then,  
To the town where she was dwellin',  
"O haste and come to my master dear,  
If your name be Barbara Allen."

So slowly, slowly rase she up,  
And slowly she came nigh him;  
And when she drew the curtain by—  
"Young man, I think you're dyin'."

"O it's I am sick and very very sick,  
And it's all for Barbara Allen."  
"O the better for me ye'se never be,  
Though, your heart's blood were a-spillin'!"

"O dinna ye mind, young man," says she,  
"When the red wine ye were fillin',

## ANONYMOUS

That ye made the healths go round and round,  
And slighted Barbara Allen?"

He turn'd his face unto the wall,  
And death was with him dealin':  
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,  
And be kind to Barbara Allen!"

As she was walking o'er the fields,  
She heard the dead-bell knellin';  
And every jow the dead-bell gave  
Cried "Woe to Barbara Allen."

"O mother, mother, make my bed,  
O make it saft and narrow:  
My love has died for me to-day,  
I'll die for him to-morrow.

"Farewell", she said, "ye virgins all,  
And shun the fault I fell in:  
Henceforth take warning by the fall  
Of cruel Barbara Allen."

## WILLIAM DUNBAR

SCOTLAND, ABOUT 1460-1520

IN the long interregnum of dulness in English poetry which followed the passing of Chaucer, the Scottish poets were the truest followers of "the father of English poetry". Lack of self-criticism, resulting in aridity, marred the verse of the English poets, who seemed not to comprehend the genius of their avowed master Chaucer. Of the "moral Gower" whom Chaucer commended, Lowell said with pardonable hyperbole that he had "positively raised tediousness to the precision of science." Of John Lydgate, Thomas Occleve and Stephen Hawes, all of whom lived mainly in the fifteenth century, the gems of poetry in their ash-heaps of prosing are so rare as to make one wonder if they may be the mere accidents of long-windedness. Chaucer's sympathetic and quizzical grasp of human character was lost to these men, as was the secret of his music and his colorful words.

In Scotland, however, at least three poets of distinction bridged the gap of the fifteenth century: the royal James I, author of the *King's Quhair* (Book); Robert Henryson, who added a conclusion of great tragic force to Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*; William Dunbar, in some things the greatest poet of his land.

Burns is Dunbar's superior in pure singing, but the earlier poet had the greater sweep of imagination and the greater variety of mood and expression. Dunbar became courtier and diplomat after being an itinerant "begging friar". He saw much of the world in its many masks and ranks; but he strives too often for "aureateness", fine language used merely for its decorative quality. Again, in his work, the old medieval liking for allegory still muffles his mouth. His burlesques, on the other hand, have been compared with those of Aristophanes. George



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Gilfillan refers to Dunbar as "the Dante of Scotland", and he questions whether any English poet has surpassed *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* in its peculiarly Dantesque qualities of severe and purged grandeur, of deep sincerity, and in that air of moral disappointment and sorrow approaching despair, which distinguished the sad-hearted lover of Beatrice. Perhaps we can sum up Dunbar's poetry by calling it a medley in which are gathered tenderness and vindictiveness, blistering satire and exuberant fancy.

### *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*

*It is not likely that you have ever seen before this subtle old masterpiece in a readable English version. In a few cases, I have taken slight liberties with the text, believing that I have not only clarified but also strengthened the lines.*

*Modernized by E. M.*

OF February the fifteenth night,  
Full long before the day's light  
I lay in till a trance,  
And then I saw both Heaven and Hell:  
Methought, among the fiend's fell  
Mahoun<sup>1</sup> called for a dance  
Of outcasts that were never shriven,  
Against the feast of Fasterns even<sup>2</sup>  
To make their observance:  
He had gallants prepare a guise<sup>3</sup>  
And cast up gambols in the skies,  
As varlets do in France.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Mahommed: he was looked on as Satan in that early age.

<sup>2</sup> The evening of Shrove Tuesday, the day before the beginning of the fast of Lent.

<sup>3</sup> mask or disguising.

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Disdainful harlots in haughty wise  
Came in in many and sundry guise;  
But yet laughed never Mahoun  
Till priests came in with shaven necks:  
Then all the fiends laughed, making mocks—  
Black-belly and Bawsy-broun.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Let’s see”, quoth he; “now who begins?”  
With that the foul Seven Deadly Sins  
Began to leap at once.  
And first of all in dance was Pride,  
With hair combed back and bonnet on side,  
Like to make ruined homes.  
And round about him, like a wheel,  
His cassock rumbled to the heel,  
Down to the very stones.  
Many deceivers with him tripped  
Through scalding fire: aye as they skipped  
They grinned with hideous groans.

Then Ire came in with trouble and strife:  
His hand was always on his knife:  
He swaggered like a bear.  
Boasters, braggarts, and wranglers  
After him passed along in pairs,  
Harnessed, in fear of war,  
In jackets and scrips and bonnets of steel:  
Their legs were chainèd to the heel:  
Perverse was their appear!<sup>1</sup>  
Some lit on others with swords that spilt,  
Some gullied others to the hilt  
With knives that shave and shear.

<sup>1</sup> demeanor.

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Next Envy followed in the dance,  
With feud and fire in every glance,  
Hid malice and despite;  
For hidden hate that traitor trembled.  
Followed him scolders that dissembled  
With feignèd wordis white;  
And flatterers in to men's faces,  
And backbiters in secret places,  
Who joyed in lying wit,  
And whisperers of false reports.  
Alas, that kings and royal courts  
Of them can not be quit!

Next him in dance came Cuvatise,  
Root of all evil and ground of vice,  
Who never can be content.  
Caitiffs, wretches, and usurers,  
Misers, hoarders, and gatherers,  
All with that warlock went.  
Out of their throats each shot on other  
Hot molten gold, methought a fudder,<sup>1</sup>  
And wildfire most fervént:  
They spewed out all their shot, and then  
Fiends filled them up to the throat agen  
With gold of every print.

Afterward Sloth, at the second bidding,  
Came like a sow out of a midding,  
And sleepy was his grunting.  
Many a tun-bellied sloven, lousy—  
Slothful sluts and wenches drowsy—  
Were for his pleasure hunting.  
He drew them forth into a chain;

<sup>1</sup> a load, 128 pounds weight.

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And Belial, with a bridle rein,  
Walloped them on their rumps.  
In dance they were so slow of feet,  
He gave them in the fire a heat  
And made them stir their stumps.

Then Lechery, that loathly corse,  
Came snorting like a breeding horse,  
And Idleness him led.  
There was with him an ugly crew  
And many a stinking body too,  
Which had in sin been dead.  
When they were entered in the dance  
They were full strange of countenance,  
Like torches burning red.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then the foul monster Gluttony  
Of maw insatiable and greedy,  
Did into the revel press.  
Him followed many a foul drunkárt,  
With can and drinking-cup and quart  
In surfeit and excess.  
Full many a waistless wally-drag,<sup>1</sup>  
With fat unwieldable, forth did wag  
In grease that did increase.  
“Drink!” aye they cried with many a gape:  
The fiends gave them hot lead to lap:  
Their bounty was no less.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> outcast.

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No minstrels played to them, no doubt,  
For gleemen they were holden out  
By day and eke by night;  
Except a minstrel that slew a man—  
So to his heritage he won,  
And entered by brief of right.

Then cried Mahoun for a Highland pageant:  
Then ran a fiend to fetch Makfadyane,  
Far northward in a nook;  
But he the war-cry had done shout  
And gathered the Ersemen<sup>1</sup> so about  
That in Hell great room they took.  
These termagants with tag and tatter  
Full loud in Erse<sup>2</sup> began to clatter,  
And croak like raven and rook;  
So deaf the Devil was with their yell  
That in the deepest pot of Hell  
He smothered them with smoke.

<sup>1</sup> Celts of Scotland and Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> The language of the Gàels or Celts in the Highlands of Scotland.

STEPHEN HAWES

ENGLAND, 1476-1523

*His Epitaph*

O MORTAL folk, you may behold and see  
How I lie here, sometime a mighty knight:  
The end of joy and all prosperitee  
Is death at last, thorough his course and might:  
After the day there cometh the dark night,  
For though the daye be never so long,  
At last the belle ringeth to evensong.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

ENGLAND, 1516-1547

FOUR centuries of English poetry are indebted to Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt for many qualities. They replanted the seed which Chaucer had sown, and which in that earlier day had been allowed to perish. Through them Italy and the Renaissance flowered in England. They reestablished the lyric, wrote the first sonnets in English, transformed the rudeness of fifteenth century verse toward metrical constancy. Surrey regularized the five-stressed iambic measure, "blank verse", which was destined to rise into "Marlowe's mighty line", into Shakespeare's marches of music, into Milton's high-erected verse. Wyatt, though an imitative poet, was perhaps the true trail-blazer of this pair; Surrey smoothed

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the roads his predecessor had hewn out of the forest. Of Wyatt's tempestuous energy a couplet hints:

"Such hammers work within my head  
That sound naught else into my ears."

These lines suggest the "pleasing grief" and musical voice of Surrey:

" . . . And I may plaine [complain] my fill  
Unto myself, unlesse this careful song  
Print in your hart some parcel of my tene [sorrow]  
For I, alas, in silence all too long,  
Of mine old hurt yet fele the wound but grene."

### *Description of Spring*

*Wherein each thing renews, save only the Lover*

THE soote season, that bud and bloom forth  
brings,  
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale:  
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;  
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.

Summer is come, for every spray now springs:  
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;  
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;  
The fishes flete with new repaired scale.

The adder all her slough away she slings;  
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;  
The busy bee her honey now she mings;  
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.

And thus I see among these pleasant things  
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

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*The Means to Attain Happy Life*

MARTIAL, the things that do attain  
The happy life be these, I find:  
The riches left, not got with pain;  
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind;

The equal friend; no grudge, no strife;  
No charge of rule, nor governance;  
Without disease, the healthful life;  
The household of continuance;

The mean diet, no delicate fare;  
True wisdom joined with simpleness;  
The night dischargèd of all care,  
Where wine the wit may not oppress.

The faithful wife, without debate;  
Such sleeps as may beguile the night:  
Contented with thine own estate  
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

THOMAS SACKVILLE, EARL OF DORSET

ENGLAND, 1536-1608

THIS poet, who was Lord Treasurer and Lord High Steward of England in the closing years of the sixteenth century, is recorded by George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, to have "kept house for forty and two years in an honorable proportion. For thirty years those of his family consisted of some two hundred persons,



## THOMAS SACKVILLE

that number appearing daily on his checkroll. A very rare example in this present age of ours [written in 1608] when housekeeping is so decayed." Another chronicler, Sir Samuel Brydges, finds it "grievous to think that this splendid genius, who lived in a great age, and was created Earl of Dorset by King James I, afterwards sunk the poet in the coarser character of statesman."

George Saintsbury says that Sackville's contributions to *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1559-63) "contain the best poetry written in the English language between Chaucer and Spenser." Some of Sackville's poems were models for Edmund Spenser in his higher and broader achievement. His finer poetic work forms the bridge between *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Fairy Queen*.

In the Induction to *The Mirror*, Sackville rises into his highest powers, where we see him seemingly in struggle with the tempest and the night.

### *Old Age*

*The Induction begins with a picture of winter, drawn with vivid colors and a powerful pencil; then follow some brief reflections, suggested by the faded fields and scattered summer flowers, on the instability of all mundane things; but suddenly the poet perceives that the night is drawing on faster, and thereupon he redoubles his pace. At last Sorrow conducts the poet to the region of departed spirits; and then follows a succession of allegoric figures drawn with remarkable strength of imagination, and with an equally remarkable command of expressive, picturesque and melodious language.*

AND next in order sad Old Age we found,  
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,  
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,  
As on the place where nature him assigned

## THOMAS SACKVILLE

To rest, when that the Sisters had untwined  
His vital thread, and ended with their knife  
The fleeting course of fast-declining life.

There heard we him, with broke and hollow plaint,  
Rue with himself his end approaching fast,  
And all for naught his wretched mind torment  
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,  
And fresh delights of lusty youth forwast;<sup>1</sup>  
Recounting which how would he sob and shriek,  
And to be young again of Jove beseek!

\* \* \* \*

Crook-backed he was, tooth-shaken and blear-eyed,  
Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four;  
With old lame bones that rattled by his side;  
His scalp all piled,<sup>2</sup> and he with eld forelore;  
His withered fist still knocking at Death's door;  
Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath;  
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

<sup>1</sup> Utterly wasted and gone.

<sup>2</sup> bald.

SIR EDWARD DYER

ENGLAND, 1545?-1607

*My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is*

MY mind to me a kingdom is!  
Such present joys therein I find  
That it excels all other bliss  
That earth affords, or grows by kind.  
Though much I want which most would have,  
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,  
No force to win a victory,  
No wily wit to salve a sore,  
No shape to feed a loving eye—  
To none of these I yield as thrall.  
For why? My mind doth serve for all.

See how plenty surfeits oft,  
And hasty climbers soon do fall.  
I see that those which are aloft  
Mishap doth threaten most of all.  
They get with toil, they keep with fear;  
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Content to live, this is my stay;  
I seek no more than may suffice;  
I press to bear no haughty sway.  
Look, what I lack my mind supplies:  
Lo, thus I triumph like a king,  
Content with that my mind doth bring.

SIR EDWARD DYER

Some have too much, yet still do crave!  
I little have, and seek no more.  
They are but poor, though much they have;  
And I am rich, with little store.  
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;  
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss;  
I grudge not at another's pain;  
No worldly waves my mind can toss;  
My state at one doth still remain.  
I fear no foe, I fawn no friend;  
I loathe not life, nor dread my end.

Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,  
Their wisdom by their rage of will,  
Their treasure is their only trust,  
A cloakèd craft their store of skill;  
But all the pleasure that I find  
Is to maintain a quiet mind.

My wealth is health and perfect ease,  
My conscience clear, my choice defence.  
I neither seek by bribes to please,  
Nor by deceit to breed offence.  
Thus do I live, thus will I die:  
Would all did so, as well as I!

## NICHOLAS BRETON

ENGLAND, 1545—1626?

**B**RETON was graduated from Oxford and wrote forty odd pastorals and satires in verse and prose, distinguished by grace and charm. His pastoral lyrics are marked by a naturalness, an easy flow and gaiety, a tenderness and purity that ought to restore him to fame.

### *Phillida and Corydon*

**I**N the merry month of May,  
In a morn by break of day,  
Forth I walked by the wood-side  
Whereas May was in her pride:  
There I spièd all alone  
Phillida and Corydon.  
Much ado there was, God wot!  
He would love and she would not.  
She said, never man was true;  
He said, none was false to you,  
He said, he had loved her long;  
She said, Love should have no wrong.  
Corydon would kiss her then;  
She said, maids must kiss no men  
Till they did for good and all;  
Then she made the shepherd call  
All the heavens to witness truth  
Never loved a truer youth.  
Thus with many a pretty oath,  
Yea and nay, and faith and troth

## NICHOLAS BRETON

Such as seely shepherds use  
When they will not Love abuse.  
Love, which had been long deluded,  
Was with kisses sweet concluded;  
And Phillida, with garlands gay,  
Was made the Lady of the May.

## EDMUND SPENSER

ENGLAND, 1552—1599

SPENSER was born of parents poor but of ancient fame. His life was a long desperate struggle with poverty and hope deferred

Living in the first part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, Spenser was subject to a greater variety of intellectual forces than perhaps any other English poet. In his work we find the spirit of his age—find many conflicts—a slant toward Catholic tradition, a zeal for Protestant reform, a love for the old ideals of feudalism and chivalry, a humanist eagerness for letters, a romantic pursuit of beauty, a devotion to chastity of soul. All these found a place in the admirable inconsistency of his mind.

His genius is not, primarily, inventive or creative, but sensitive and receptive. He was richly prepared for his huge incomplete task—the penning of one of the three or four greatest poems of England. Spenser had a sympathetic nature, a wide-reaching intelligence, profound learning ("our sage and serious Spenser", Milton called him) a leaping imagination, a soothing melody and harmony of speech. He has "many a winding bout of linked sweetness long drawn out."

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Now, *The Faerie Queene* embodies Spenser's genius and gathers the many interests of his mind under the superficial unity of an allegory. In his use of this old form Spenser's aims were vague and conflicting, yet this fact is of no account when we are reading him for his poetry. "His allegory", said Leigh Hunt, ". . . is but one part allegory, and nine parts beauty and enjoyment." The vastitude of Spenser's project (a veiled exposition of all ethical philosophy, with a second mirror of allegory glancing at the great ones of Spenser's age) proves the poet to be one of the great "enterprisers." The "moral and political virtues" were to be shown in twenty-four books, or parts, of which only a trifle more than a quarter was completed. In the books finished (or at least extant) the personal qualities of Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice and Courtesy are celebrated. In each case the virtue is represented by a knight-errant who maintains the excellence of his cause in manifold combats and other romantic adventures.

*The Faerie Queene* stands on a level with *The Canterbury Tales*; yet it is more extraordinary in its invention, and far more comforting to the spirit. It is surpassed by Milton only in the austerity and sublimity of his greatness—surpassed by Shakespeare only in the vastness of his insight into character.

Spenser's "minor" poems would alone make the reputation of a poet of the first order. His early *Shepheards Calender*, in emulation of classical and other pastorals, is a queer mingling of folk tradition and rustic northern speech with literary tradition and the language of polite society; already the love of antique lore was showing itself. In some of his *Amoretti*, or love sonnets, also in his *Hymnes*, with their "union of intellectual and sensual rapture", and particularly in his *Prothalamion* and *Epithalamion*, marriage songs, he rises to sublimity.

Spenser's deliberately archaic diction, which has been inveighed against, is only the exterior dress of his writing; if it does not please, it may be ignored. Spenser has been

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censured for tediousness; but critics who find him dull have a dull spot in their minds. There will always remain his blazonry of picturing, his supernal music, his lucent imagination, his chasteness of ideas.

Almost all poets since his time have been debtors to Spenser and have done him reverence. Poets as unlike as Milton and Pope, as ill-mated as Dryden and Coleridge, have praised him. His "Spenserian stanza" was copied by Burns, Byron, Shelley and Keats. Wordsworth described him:

"Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven  
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace."

Leaving out the coarser elements of the Elizabethan Renaissance, you will find nearly all of its glory and glamor in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. There is no stain of carnality upon his moon-lighted, melodious pages. He kindles man to a noble discontent with prosaic views of life. He lifts man into a divine atmosphere in which he himself becomes divine.

*The Faerie Queene* is all a dream of idealism, a story of the struggle of the soul toward the supernal beauty, toward Love's eternity. Spenser is kindred to Plato, and sees behind all mortal things the immortal Idea which renders them luminous. The seen is only the shadow: the unseen is the everlasting reality.

The poem is a mingling of the nobilities of Christian chivalry with the vision of Pagan perfection. It is all a lofty endeavor to idealize the real. Never before—never since—has man ever listened to such a poetical portrayal of his imperishable dreams.



EDMUND SPENSER

*The Bower of Bliss*

*Modernized*

FROM "THE FAERIE QUEENE"

THERE the most dainty paradise on ground  
Itself doth offer to his sober eye,  
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,  
And none does others happiness envy;  
The painted flowers; the trees upshooting high;  
The dales for shade; the hills for breathing space;  
The trembling groves; the crystal running by;  
And, that which all fair works doth most aggrace,<sup>1</sup>  
The art, which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

One would have thought (so cunningly the rude  
And scornèd parts were mingled with the fine)  
That Nature had for wantonness ensude<sup>2</sup>  
Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;  
So striving each the other to undermine,  
Each did the others work more beautify;  
So differing both in wills agreed in fine:  
So all agreed, through sweet diversity,  
This garden to adorn with all variety.

And in the midst of all a fountain stood,  
Of richest substance that on earth might be,  
So pure and shiny that the silver flood  
Through every channel running one might see;  
Most goodly it with curious imagery  
Was over-wrought, and shapes of naked boys,  
Of which some seemed with lively jollity  
To fly about, playing their wanton toys,  
Whilst others did themselves embay<sup>3</sup> in liquid joys.

<sup>1</sup> give grace to.

<sup>2</sup> imitated.

<sup>3</sup> bathe.

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And over all, of purest gold, was spread  
A trail of ivy in his native hue;  
For the rich metal was so colorèd,  
That wight, who did not well avised<sup>1</sup> it view,  
Would surely deem it to be ivy true;  
Low his lascivious arms adown did creep,  
That, themselves dipping in the silver dew,  
Their fleecy flowers they fearefully did steep,  
Which drops of crystal seemed for wantoness to weep.

Infinite streams continually did well  
Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,  
The which into an ample laver fell,  
And shortly grew to so great quantity,  
That like a little lake it seemed to be,  
Whose depth exceeded not three cubits height,  
That through the waves one might the bottom see,  
All paved, beneath with jasper shining bright,  
That seemed the fountain in that sea did sail upright.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eftsoons<sup>2</sup> they heard a most melodious sound,  
Of all that might delight a dainty ear,  
Such as at once might not on living ground,  
Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere.  
Right hard it was for wight which did it hear,  
To read what manner music that might be;  
For all that pleasing is to living ear  
Was there consorted in one harmony;  
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree:

<sup>1</sup> with attention.

<sup>2</sup> immediately.

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The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,  
Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;  
The angelical soft trembling voices made  
To the instruments divine response meet;  
The silver-sounding instruments did meet  
With the base murmur of the waters fall;  
The waters fall, with difference discreet,  
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;  
The gentle warbling wind low answerèd to all.

### *Una and the Lion*

*Modernized*

FROM "THE FAERIE QUEENE"

ONE day, nigh weary of the irksome way,  
From her unhasty beast she did alight;  
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay  
In secret shadow, far from all men's sight;  
From her fair head her fillet she undight,  
And laid her stole aside. Her angel's face,  
As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,  
And made a sunshine in the shady place;  
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

It fortunèd, out of the thickest wood  
A ramping lion rushèd suddenly,  
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood:<sup>1</sup>  
Soone as the royal virgin he did spy,

<sup>1</sup> blood of wild animals.

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With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,  
To have at once devoured her tender corse;  
But to the prey whenas he drew more nigh  
His bloody rage asuaged with remorse,<sup>1</sup>  
And, with the sight amazed, forgot his furious force.

Instead thereof, he kissed her weary feet,  
And licked her lily hands with fawning tongue;  
As he her wronged innocence did weet.<sup>2</sup>  
O how can beauty master the most strong,  
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!  
Whose yielded pride and proud submission,  
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,  
Her heart gan melt in great compassion;  
And drizzling tears did shed for pure affection.

"The lion, lord of every beast in field,"  
Quoth she, "his princely puissance doth abate,  
And mighty proud to humble weak<sup>3</sup> does yield,  
Forgetful of the hungry rage, which late  
Him pricked in pity of my sad estate:  
But he, my lion, and my noble lord,  
How does he find in cruel heart to hate  
Her, that him loved, and ever most adored  
As the god of my life? why hath he me abhorred?"

Redounding tears did choke the end of her plaint,  
Which softly echoed from the neighbor wood;  
And, sad to see her sorrowful constraint,  
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;  
With pity calmed, down fell his angry mood.  
At last, in close heart shutting up her pain,  
Arose the virgin born of heavenly brood,

<sup>1</sup> pity.

<sup>2</sup> understand

<sup>3</sup> weakness.

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And to her snowy palfrey got again,  
To seek her strayèd champion if she might attain.

The lion would not leave her desolate,  
But with her went along, as a strong guard  
Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate  
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:  
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward;  
And, when she waked, he waited diligent,  
With humble service to her will prepared;  
From her fair eyes he took commandement,  
And ever by her looks conceivèd her intent.

*Venus in Search of Cupid, Coming to Diana*

*Modernized*

FROM "THE FAERIE QUEENE"

SHORTLY unto the wasteful woods she came,  
Whereas she found the goddess with her crew,  
After late chase of their embrewèd game,  
Sitting beside a fountain in a rew;  
Some of them washing with the liquid dew  
From off their dainty limbs the dusty sweat  
And soil, which did defile their lively hue;  
Others lay shaded from the scorching heat;  
The rest upon her person gave attendance great.

She having hung upon a bough on high  
Her bow and painted quiver, had unlaced  
Her silver buskins from her nimble thigh,  
And her lank loins ungirt and breasts unbraced,  
After her heat the breathing cold to taste;

## EDMUND SPENSER

Her golden locks, that late in tresses bright  
Embraided were for hindering of her haste,  
Now loose about her shoulders lay undight,  
And were with sweet ambrosia all besprinkled light.

Soon as she Venus saw behind her back,  
She was ashamed to be so loose surprised,  
And waked half wrath against her damsels slack,  
That had not her thereof before advised,  
But suffered her so carelessly disguised  
Be overtaken: soon her garments loose  
Upgathering in her bosom she comprised,  
Well as she might, and to the goddess rose,  
While all her nymphs did like a garland her inclose.

### *The Cave of Mammon*

*Modernized*

FROM "THE FAERIE QUEENE"

*"Spenser's strength", says Hazlitt, "is not strength of will or action, of bone and muscle, nor is it coarse and palpable; but it assumes a character of vastness and sublimity seen through the same visionary medium and blended with the appalling associations of preternatural agency. We need only to turn in proof of this to The Cave of Mammon, or the account of the change of Malbecco into Jealousy." Sir Guyon, crossing a desert, finds Mammon sitting midst his gold in a gloomy valley. Mammon, taking him down into his cave, tempts him with the treasures there, and also with those in the Garden of Proserpine.*

THAT house's form within was rude and strong,  
Like a huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,  
From whose rough vault the ragged branches hung

## EDMUND SPENSER

Embossed with massy gold of glorious gift,  
And with rich metal loaded every rift,  
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;  
And over them Arachne high did lift  
Her cunning web, and spread her subtle net,  
Enwrappèd in foul smoke, and clouds more black than  
jet.

Both roof and floor, and walls were all of gold,  
But overgrown with dust and old decay,  
And hid in darkness, that none could behold  
The hue thereof; for view of chearful day  
Did never in that house itself display,  
But a faint shadow of uncertain light;  
Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away;  
Or as the moon, clothèd with cloudy night,  
Does show to him that walks in fear and sad affright.

In all that room was nothing to be seen,  
But huge great iron chests and coffers strong,  
All barred with double bands, that none could ween  
Them to enforce by violence or wrong;  
On every side they placèd were along;  
But all the ground with skulls was scatterèd,  
And dead men's bones, which round about were flung,  
Whose lives (it seemèd) whilom there were shed,  
And their vile carcasses now left unburied.

They forward pass, nor Guyon yet spake word,  
Till that they came unto an iron door,  
Which to them opened of its own accord,  
And showed of riches such exceeding store,  
As eye of man did never see before,  
Nor ever could within one place be found,  
Though all the wealth which is, or was of yore,

## EDMUND SPENSER

Could gathered be through all the world around,  
And that above were added to that under ground.

The charge thereof unto a covetous sprite  
Commanded was, who thereby did attend,  
And warily awaited, day and night,  
From other covetous fiends it to defend,  
Who it to rob and ransack did intend.  
Then Mammon turning to that warrior, said:  
"Lo here the worldè's bliss! lo here the end,  
To which all men do aim, rich to be made!  
Such grace now to be happy is before thee laid."

"Certes" (said he) "I n'll thine offered grace,  
Nor to be made so happy do intend;  
Another bliss before mine eyes I place,  
Another happiness, another end:  
To them that list, these base regards I lend;  
But I in arms, and in achievements brave,  
Do rather choose my fitting hours to spend,  
And to be lord of those that riches have,  
Than them to have myself, and be their servile slave."

\* \* \* \* \*

*Mammon leads Sir Guyon onward through the cave, showing him more treasures, and afterwards takes him into the palace of Ambition; but all in vain.*

Mammon emmovèd was with inward wrath;  
Yet forcing it to fain, him forth thence led,  
Through griesly shadows, by a beaten path,  
Into a garden goodly garnishèd  
With herbs and fruits, whose kinds must not be read:  
Not such as earth, out of her fruitful womb,



## EDMUND SPENSER

Throws forth to men, sweet and well-savorèd,  
But direful deadly black, both leaf and bloom,  
Fit to adorn the dead and deck the dreary tomb.

There mournful cypress grew in greatest store;  
And trees of bitter gall; and heben sad;  
Dead sleeping poppy; and black hellebore;  
Cold coloquintida; and tetra mad;  
Mortal samnitis; and cicuta bad,  
With which the unjust Athenians made to die  
Wise Socrates, who therefore quaffing glad  
Poured out his life and last philosophy  
To the fair Critias, his dearest belamy!

The garden of Prosérpina this high;  
And in the midst thereof a silver seat,  
With a thick arbor goodly over-dight,  
In which she often used from open heat  
Herself to shroud, and pleasures to entreat:  
Next thereunto did grow a goodly tree,  
With branches broad dispread and body great,  
Clothèd with leaves, that none the wood might see  
And loaded all with fruit as thick as it might be.

Their fruit were golden apples, glistening bright,  
That goodly was their glory to behold;  
On earth like never grew, nor living wight  
Like ever saw, but they from hence were sold;  
For those, which Hercules with conquest bold  
Got from great Atlas' daughters, hence began,  
And planted there did bring forth fruit of gold;  
And those, with which th' Eubean young man wan  
Swift Atalanta, when through craft he her out-ran.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Here also sprung that goodly golden fruit,  
With which Acontius got his lover true,  
Whom he had long time sought with fruitless suit;  
Here eke that famous golden apple grew,  
The which amongst the gods false Até threw;  
For which the Idæan ladies disagreed,  
Till partial Paris deemed it Venus' due,  
And had of her fair Helen for his meed,  
That many noble Greeks and Trojans made to bleed.

The warlike elf much wondered at this tree  
So fair and great, that shadowed all the ground;  
And his broad branches, laden with rich fee,  
Did stretch themselves without the utmost bound  
Of this great garden, compassed with a mound,  
Which overhanging, they themselves did steep  
In a black flood, which flowed about it round.  
That is the river of Cocytus deep,  
In which full many souls do endless wail and weep.

### *The Nymphs and Graces Dancing to a Shepherd's Pipe*

*Modernized*

FROM "THE FAERIE QUEENE"

INTO this place whereas the elfin knight  
Approached, him seemèd that the merry sound  
Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on height,  
And many feet fast thumping the hollow ground;  
That through the woods their echo did rebound;  
He nigher drew, to weet what might it be;  
There he a troop of ladies dancing found

## EDMUND SPENSER

Full merrily, and making gladful glee,  
And in the midst a shepherd piping he did see.

He durst not enter into the open green,  
For dread of them unwares to be descried,  
For breaking off their dance, if he were seen;  
But in the covert of the wood did bide,  
Beheld of all, yet of them unespied:  
There he did see (that pleasèd much his sight  
That even he himself his eyes envied)  
A hundred naked maidens lily white,  
All rangèd in a ring, and dancing in delight.

All they without were rangèd in a ring  
And dancèd round, but in the midst of them  
Three other ladies did both dance and sing,  
The whilst the rest them round about did hem,  
And like a garland did in compass stem;  
And in the midst of those same three were placed  
Another damsel, as a precious gem  
Amidst a ring most richly well enhansed,  
That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced.

Those were the Graces, daughters of delight,  
Handmaids of Venus, which are wont to haunt  
Upon this hill, and dance there day and night;  
Those three to man all gifts of grace do graunt,  
And all that Venus in herself doth vaunt  
Is borrowèd of them; but that fair one  
That in the midst was placèd paravaunt,  
Was she to whom that shepherd piped alone,  
That made him pipe so merrily as never none.

She was, to weet, that jolly shepherd's lass  
Which pipèd there unto that merry rout;

## EDMUND SPENSER

That jolly shepherd which there pipèd, was  
Poor Colin Clout (who knows not Colin Clout?)  
He piped apace, whilst they him danced about.  
Pipe, jolly shepherd! pipe thou now apace  
Unto thy Love, that made thee low to lout;  
Thy Love is present there with thee in place,  
Thy Love is there advaunst to be another Grace.

*And there she remains, dancing in the midst of the Graces for ever, herself a Grace, made one by the ordinance of the poor but great poet who here addresses himself under his pastoral title, and justly prides himself on the power of conferring immortality on his Love.*

### *Archimago's Hermitage*

*Modernized*

FROM "THE FAERIE QUEENE"

*Archimago, a hypocritical magician, lures Una and the Red-cross Knight into his abode; and while they are asleep, sends to Morpheus, the god of sleep, for a false dream to produce discord between them. Note the exquisite modulation of the first stanza.*

A LITTLE lowly hermitage it was  
Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,  
Far from resort of people, that did pass  
In travel to and fro: a little wide  
There was a holy chapel edified,  
Wherein the hermit duly wont to say  
His holy things each morn and eventide;  
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play  
Which from a sacred fountain wellèd forth alway.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Arrivèd there the little house they fill,  
Nor look for entertainment where none was;  
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will:  
The noblest mind the best contentment has.  
With fair discourse the evening so they pass,  
For that old man of pleasing words had store,  
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glass:  
He told of saints and popes, and evermore  
He strewed an Ave Mary after and before.

The drooping night thus creepeth on them fast;  
And the sad humor, loading their eye-lids,  
As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast  
Sweet slumbering dew; the which to sleep them bids.  
Unto their lodgings then his guests he rid;  
Where, when all drowned in deadly sleep he finds,  
He to his study goes, and there amidst  
His magic books and arts of sundry kinds,  
He seeks out mighty charms to trouble sleepy minds.

Then choosing out few words most horrible  
(Let none them read!) thereof did verses frame,  
With which, and other spells like terrible,  
He bad awake black Pluto's grisly dame,  
And cursèd Heaven; and spake reproachful shame  
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light:  
A bold bad man, that dared to call by name  
Great Gorgon, prince of darkness and dead night;  
At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

And forth he called out of deep darkness dread  
Legions of sprites, the which, like little flies,  
Fluttering about his ever damnèd head,  
Await where to their service he applies,  
To aid his friends, or fray his enemies;

## EDMUND SPENSER

Of those he chose out two, the falsest two  
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lies;  
The one of them he gave a message to,  
The other by himself staid other work to do.

He making speedy way through spersèd air,  
And through the world of waters wide and deep,  
To Morpheus' house doth hastily repair.  
Amid the bowels of the earth full steep,  
And low, where dawning day doth never peep,  
His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed  
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steep  
In silver dew his ever-drooping head,  
While sad night over him her mantle black doth spread.

Whose double gates he findeth lockèd fast;  
The one fair framed of burnished ivory,  
The other all with silver overcast;  
And wakeful dogs before them far do lie,  
Watching to banish Care their enemy,  
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleep.  
By them the sprite doth pass in quietly  
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drownèd deep  
In drowsy fit he finds; of nothing he takes keep.

And more to lull him in his slumber soft,  
A trickling stream, from high rock tumbling down,  
And ever drizzling rain upon the loft,  
Mixed with a murmuring wind, much like the sound  
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoond:  
No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,  
As still are wont t' annoy the wallèd town,  
Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lies,  
Wrapt in eternal silence, far from enemies.

## EDMUND SPENSER

The messenger approaching to him spake;  
But his waste words returned to him in vain:  
So sound he slept, that nought might him awake.  
Then rudely he him thrust, and pushed with pain,  
Whereat he 'gan to stretch: but he again  
Shook him so hard, that forcèd him to speak  
As one then in a dream, whose drier brain  
Is tossed with troubled sights and fancies weak;  
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence break.

The sprite then 'gan more boldly him to wake,  
And threatened unto him the dreaded name  
Of Hecatè: whereat he 'gan to quake,  
And lifting up his lumpish head, with blame  
Half angry askèd him, for what he came.  
"Hither," quoth he, "me Archimago sent;  
He that the stubborn sprites can wisely tame;  
He bids thee to him send for his intent  
A fit false dream, that can delude the sleepers' sent."

The god obeyed; and calling forth straightway  
A diverse dream out of his prison dark,  
Delivered it to him, and down did lay  
His heavy head, devoid of careful cark;  
Whose senses all were straight benumbed and stark.  
He, back returning by the ivory door,  
Remounted up as light as cheerful lark;  
And on his little wings the dream he bore  
In haste unto his lord, where he him left afore.

## EDMUND SPENSER

### *Epithalamion*

*Two hundred years after Spenser, there appeared the celebrated Swendenborg, the greatest seer of the modern world. Of his volume, "Marriage Love", Ralph Waldo Emerson says: "It comes near to being The Hymn of Love, which Plato attempted in 'The Banquet'—the love which Dante says Casella sang among the angels in Paradise." The poet Spenser would have rejoiced in this epochal volume; for—as Alfred Welsh says—"The loftiest, deepest, most angelic element in this genius is reverence for woman—which is only a worship of the supernal charm and attraction rendered visible in her. All the wealth of his respect and tenderness is poured out at the feet of his heroines. In his adoration, he lifts them up to heights where no mortal fleck is visible. In this exalted mood he sings of his bride, in the 'Epithalamion', his marriage song."*

*This is lofty emotion, lofty idealism; and how distant it is from all our cold modern realism, which reduces sex to a mere physiological function, and strips from romantic love all the music and mystery that invested it in the old chivalric ages.*

YE learned sisters, which have oftentimes  
Been to me aiding, others to adorn,  
Whom ye thought worthy of your graceful rhymes,  
That even the greatest did not greatly scorn  
To hear their names sung in your simple lays,  
But joyed in their praise;  
And when ye list your own mishaps to mourn,  
Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck did raise,  
Your string could soon to sadder tenor turn,  
And teach the woods and waters to lament  
Your doleful dreriment:



## EDMUND SPENSER

Now lay those sorrowful complaints aside;  
And, having all your heads with garlands crowned,  
Help me mine own love's praises to resound;  
Nor let the same of any be envide:  
So Orpheus did for his own bride!  
So I unto my self alone will sing;  
The woods shall to me answer, and my Echo ring.

Early, before the world's light-giving lamp  
His golden beam upon the hills doth spread,  
Having dispersed the night's uncheareful damp,  
Do ye awake; and, with fresh lustihead,  
Go to the bower of my belovèd love,  
My truest turtle dove;  
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,  
And long since ready forth his mask to move,  
With his bright Tead that flames with many a flake,  
And many a bachelor to wait on him,  
In their fresh garments trim.  
Bid her awake therefore, and soon her dight,  
For lo! the wishèd day is come at last,  
That shall, for all the pains and sorrows past,  
Pay to her usury of long delight:  
And, whilst she doth her dight,  
Do ye to her of joy and solace sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your Echo ring.

Bring with you all the Nymphs that you can hear,  
Both of the rivers and the forests green,  
And of the sea that neighbors to her near:  
All with gay garlands goodly well beseen.  
And let them also with them bring in hand  
Another gay garland,  
For my fair Love, of lilies and of roses.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Bound truelove wise, with a blue silk riband,  
And let them make great store of bridal posies,  
And let them eke bring store of other flowers,  
To deck the bridal bowers.  
And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,  
For fear the stones her tender foot should wrong,  
Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,  
And diapered like the discolored mead;  
Which done, do at her chamber door await,  
For she will waken straight;  
The while do ye this song unto her sing,  
The woods shall to you answer, and your Echo ring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wake now, my Love, awake! for it is time;  
The Rosy Morn long since left Tithone's bed,  
All ready to her silver couch to climb;  
And Phœbus gins to show his glorious head.  
Hark! how the cheerful birds do chaunt their lays  
And carol of Love's praise.  
The merry lark his matins sings aloft;  
The thrush replies; the mavis descant plays;  
The ousel shrills; the ruddock warbles soft;  
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,  
To this day's merriment.  
Ah! my dear Love, why do ye sleep thus long,  
When meeter were that ye should now awake,  
To await the coming of your joyous make,  
And hearken to the bird's love-learnèd song,  
The dewy leaves among!  
For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and their Echo ring.

My Love is now awake out of her dreams,  
And her fair eyes, like stars that dimmèd were

## EDMUND SPENSER

With darksome cloud, now show their goodly beams  
More bright than Hesperus his head doth rear.  
Come now, ye damsels, daughters of delight,  
Help quickly her to dight:  
But first come ye fair hours, which were begot,  
In Jove's sweet Paradise of Day and Night;  
Which do the seasons of the year allot,  
And all, that ever in this world is fair,  
Do make and still repair:  
And ye three handmaids of the Cyprian Queen,  
The which do still adorn her beauty's pride,  
Help to adorn my beautiful bride:  
And, as ye her array, still throw between  
Some graces to be seen;  
And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,  
The whiles the woods shall answer, and your Echo ring.

Now is my Love all ready forth to come:  
Let all the virgins therefore well await:  
And ye fresh boys, that tend upon her groom,  
Prepare yourselves; for he is coming straight.  
Set all your things in seemly good array,  
Fit for so joyful day:  
The joyfulest day that ever sun did see,  
Fair Sun! show forth thy favorable ray,  
And let thy life-full heat not fervent be,  
For fear of burning her sunshiny face,  
Her beauty to disgrace.  
O fairest Phœbus! father of the Muse!  
If ever I did honor thee aright,  
Or sing the thing that might thy mind delight,  
Do not thy servant's simple boon refuse;  
But let this day, let this one day, be mine;  
Let all the rest be thine.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Then I thy sovran praises loud will sing,  
That all the woods shall answer, and their Echo ring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lo! where she comes along with portly pace,  
Like Phœbe, from her chamber of the East,  
Arising forth to run her mighty race,  
Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best.  
So well it her beseems, that ye would ween  
Some angel she had been.  
Her long loose yellow locks like golden wire,  
Sprinkled with pearl, and pearling flowers atween,  
Do like a golden mantle her attire;  
And, being crownèd with a garland green,  
Seem like some maiden Queen.  
Her modest eyes, abashèd to behold  
So many gazers as on her do stare,  
Upon the lowly ground affixèd are;  
Nor dare lift up her countenance too bold,  
But blush to hear her praises sung so loud,  
So far from being proud.  
Nathless do ye still loud her praises sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your Echo ring.

\* \* \* \* \*

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,  
The inward beauty of her lively spright,  
Garnished with heavenly gifts of high degree,  
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,  
And stand astonished like to those which read  
Medusa's mazeful head.  
There dwells sweet Love, and constant Chastity,  
Unspotted Faith, and comely Womanhood,  
Regard of Honor, and mild Modesty;  
There Virtue reigns as Queen in royal throne,  
And giveth laws alone,

## EDMUND SPENSER

The which the base affections do obey,  
And yield their services unto her will;  
Nor thought of thing uncomely ever may  
Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.  
Had ye once seen these her celestial treasures,  
And unrevealèd pleasures,  
Then would ye wonder, and her praises sing,  
That all the woods should answer, and your Echo ring.

Open the temple gates unto my Love,  
Open them wide that she may enter in,  
And all the posts adorn as doth behoove,  
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,  
For to receive this Saint with honor due,  
That cometh in to you.  
With trembling steps, and humble reverence,  
She cometh in, before the Almighty's view;  
Of her ye virgins learn obedience,  
When so ye come into those holy places,  
To humble your proud faces:  
Bring her up to the high altar, that she may  
The sacred ceremonies there partake,  
The which do endless matrimony make;  
And let the roaring organs loudly play  
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;  
The whiles, with hollow throats,  
The choiristers the joyous anthems sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and their Echo ring.

Behold, while she before the altar stands,  
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,  
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,  
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,  
And the pure snow, with goodly vermeil stain

## EDMUND SPENSER

Like crimson dyed in grain:  
That even the angels, which continually  
About the sacred altar do remain,  
Forget their service and about her fly,  
Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair,  
The more they on it stare.  
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
Are governèd with goodly modesty,  
That suffers not one look to glance awry,  
Which may let in a little thought unsound.  
Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,  
The pledge of all our band!  
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your Echo ring.

Now all is done: bring home the bride again;  
Bring home the triumph of our victory:  
Bring home with you the glory of her gain  
With joyance bring her and with jollity.  
Never had man more joyful day then this,  
Whom Heaven would heap with bliss,  
Make feast therefore now all this live-long day;  
This day for ever to me holy is.  
Pour out the wine without restraint or stay,  
Pour not by cups, but by the belly full,  
Pour out to all that wull,  
And sprinkle all the posts and walls with wine,  
That they may sweat, and drunken be withal.  
Crown ye god Bacchus with a coronal,  
And Hymen also crown with wreaths of vine;  
And let the Graces dance unto the rest,  
For they can do it best:  
The while the maidens do their carol sing,  
To which the woods shall answer, and their Echo ring.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Ring ye the bells, ye young men of the town,  
And leave your wonted labors for this day:  
This day is holy; do ye write it down,  
That ye for ever it remember may.  
This day the sun is in his chiefest height,  
With Barnaby the bright,  
From whence declining daily by degrees,  
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,  
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.  
But for this time it ill ordainèd was,  
To choose the longest day in all the year,  
And shortest night, when longest fitter were:  
Yet never day so long, but late would pass.  
Ring ye the bells, to make it wear away,  
And bonfires make all day;  
And dance about them, and about them sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your Echo ring.

Ah! when will this long weary day have end,  
And lend me leave to come unto my love?  
How slowly do the hours their numbers spend?  
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move?  
Haste thee, O fairest Planet, to thy home,  
Within the Western foam:  
Thy tired steeds long since have need of rest.  
Long though it be, at last I see it gloom,  
And the bright evening-star with golden crest  
Appear out of the East.  
Fair child of beauty! glorious lamp of love!  
That all the host of heaven in ranks dost lead,  
And guidest lovers through the night's sad dread,  
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,  
And seemst to laugh atween thy twinkling light,  
As joying in the sight

EDMUND SPENSER

Of these glad many, which for joy do sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and their Echo ring!

\* \* \* \* \*

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,  
In which a thousand torches flaming bright  
Do burn, that to us wretched earthly clods  
In dreadful darkness lend desired light;  
And all ye powers which in the same remain,  
More then we men can feign,  
Pour out your blessing on us plenteously,  
And happy influence upon us rain,  
That we may raise a large posterity,  
Which from the earth, which they may long possess  
With lasting happiness,  
Up to your haughty palaces may mount;  
And, for the guerdon of their glorious merit,  
May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,  
Of blessed Saints for to increase the count.  
So let us rest, sweet Love, in hope of this,  
And cease till then our timely joys to sing:  
The woods no more us answer, nor our Echo ring!



## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

ENGLAND, 1552—1618

RALEIGH is perhaps the most surprising of the men of action to become poets. Graduated from Oxford, he went as a volunteer to France in 1569 and served for several years in the continental wars. Received with favor at the English Court, he was knighted, and distinguished himself as an explorer and planter of colonies in America. John Nichol observes, in his *Life of Francis Bacon*, that while Bacon was "the grandest figure of the age, Raleigh was the most fascinating." Of the versatility and fervid daring of the Elizabethans, he remains the chief representative. Soldier, courtier, philosopher and poet, "he carried the spirit of Sidney into the field, and discussed meters and myths with Spenser when it was won." Chief among his few poems is *The Lie*, which was long believed to have been written the night before his execution as a political conspirator. It is now known, however, to have been in manuscript in 1596. Thomas Arnold does not believe that any one else then living—Shakespeare excepted—was capable of having written this poem.

A splendid impatience shows in some of Raleigh's verses: in others the shadow of death, in which he dwelt during his imprisonment, stretches across the page. He is often elevated in tone—seldom low. His poetry is simple, energetic, melodious. Spenser called him "the summer's nightingale."

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

*The Silent Lover*

I

PASSIONS are likened best to floods and streams:  
The shallow murmur, but the deeps are dumb;  
So, when affection yields discourse, it seems  
The bottom is but shallow whence they come.  
They that are rich in words, in words discover  
That they are poor in that which makes a lover.

II

Wrong not, sweet empress of my heart,  
The merit of true passion,  
With thinking that he feels no smart,  
That sues for no compassion.

Silence in love bewrays more woe  
Than words, though ne'er so witty:  
A beggar that is dumb, you know,  
May challenge double pity.

Then wrong not, dearest to my heart,  
My true, though secret passion:  
He smarteth most that hides his smart,  
And sues for no compassion.

*The Conclusion*

EVEN such is Time, that takes in trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with earth and dust;  
Who in the dark and silent grave,

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days;  
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

*A Vision Upon This Conceit of the Faerie  
Queene*

METHOUGHT I saw the grave where Laura  
lay,  
Within that temple, where the vestal flame  
Was wont to burn; and passing by that way,  
To see that buried dust of living fame,  
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,  
All suddenly I saw the Faerie Queene,  
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept,  
And, from thenceforth, those Graces were not seen;

For they this Queen attended; in whose stead  
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse:  
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,  
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce,  
Where Homer's sprite did tremble all for grief,  
And cursed the access of that celestial thief!

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

### *The Lie*

*This remarkable poem was ascribed to Joshua Sylvester by William Cullen Bryant. But on looking into the folio volume of Sylvester's poems, I find that he uses the beautiful lines merely as a text, to which he hangs some of his own trivial verses. Emerson attributes the poem to Raleigh, and I follow his distinguished leading.*

GO, soul, the body's guest,  
Upon a thankless errand!  
Fear not to touch the best,  
The truth shall be thy warrant;  
Go, since I needs must die,  
And give the world the lie.

Go tell the court it glows  
And shines like rotten wood;  
Go tell the church it shows  
What's good, and doth no good.  
If church and court reply,  
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates they live  
Acting by others' actions,  
Not loved unless they give,  
Not strong but by their factions.  
If potentates reply,  
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition  
That rule affairs of State,  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice only hate.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

And if they once reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most,  
They beg for more by spending,  
Who in their greatest cost,  
Seek nothing but commending.  
And if they make reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it lacks devotion,  
Tell love it is but lust,  
Tell time it is but motion,  
Tell flesh it is but dust;  
And wish them not reply,  
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth,  
Tell honor how it alters,  
Tell beauty how she blasteth,  
Tell favor how she falters.  
And as they shall reply,  
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles  
In tickle points of niceness;  
Tell wisdom she entangles  
Herself in over-wiseness.  
And when they do reply,  
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness,  
Tell skill it is pretension,  
Tell charity of coldness,

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Tell law it is contention.  
And as they do reply,  
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness,  
Tell nature of decay,  
Tell friendship of unkindness,  
Tell justice of delay.  
And if they will reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,  
But vary by esteeming;  
Tell schools they want profoundness,  
And stand too much on seeming.  
If arts and schools reply,  
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city,  
Tell how the country erreth,  
Tell, manhood shakes off pity,  
Tell, virtue least preferreth.  
And if they do reply,  
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I  
Commanded thee, done blabbing—  
Although to give the lie  
Deserves no less than stabbing—  
Yet stab at thee who will,  
No stab the soul can kill.

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

### *The Pilgrimage*

*This strange poem seems to have been written soon after Sir Walter Raleigh had received the news that he was to be beheaded.*

GIVE me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
My staff of faith to walk upon,  
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation,  
My gown of glory, hope's true gauge;  
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer;  
No other balm will there be given;  
Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,  
Travelleth towards the land of Heaven;  
Over the silver mountains,  
Where spring the nectar fountains:  
There will I kiss  
The bowl of bliss;  
And drink mine everlasting fill  
Upon every milken hill.  
My soul will be a-dry before;  
But after, it will thirst no more.

Then by that happy blissful day,  
More peaceful pilgrims I shall see,  
That have cast off their rags of clay,  
And walk apparelled fresh like me.  
I'll take them first  
To quench their thirst  
And taste of nectar's suckets,  
At those clear wells

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Where sweetness dwells,  
Drawn up by saints in crystal buckets.

And when our bottles and all we  
Are filled with immortality,  
Then the blessed paths we'll travel,  
Strewed with rubies thick as gravel;  
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,  
High walls of coral and pearly bowers.  
From thence to Heaven's bribeless hall,  
Where no corrupted voices brawl;  
No conscience molten into gold,  
No forged accuser bought or sold,  
No cause deferred, no vain-spent journey;  
For there Christ is the King's Attorney,  
Who pleads for all without degrees,  
And He hath angels, but no fees.  
And when the grand twelve-million jury  
Of our sins, with direful fury,  
'Gainst our souls black verdicts give,  
Christ pleads His death, and then we live.  
Be Thou my speaker, taintless pleader,  
Unblotted lawyer, true proceeder!  
Thou giv'st salvation even for alms;  
Not with a bribèd lawyer's palms.  
And this is mine eternal plea  
To Him that made heaven, earth and sea,  
That, since my flesh must die so soon,  
And want a head to dine next noon,  
Just at the stroke, when my veins start  
and spread,  
Set on my soul an everlasting head!  
Then am I ready, like a palmer fit,  
To tread those blest paths which before  
I writ.



## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Of death and judgment, Heaven and Hell,  
Who oft doth think, must needs die well.

## JOHN LYLY

ENGLAND, 1553-1606

**E**UPHUES, a novel, published by Lyly in 1579, became at once what would now be called "a best seller". The English Court had all the ornate phrases by heart. The language of the work is extremely affected, consisting chiefly of antithesis in thought and expression. Shakespeare caricatures it in *Love's Labor Lost*, wherein Armado is "a man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight, that hath a mint of phrases in his brain—one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony." But the extravagance of the novel sprang from the general burst of delight in England's new resources of thought and language—the popular new sense of pleasure in delicacy or grandeur of phrase, in the structure and arrangement of sentences, in what has been termed the atmosphere of words out of which style was itself to spring.

The muse of John Lyly was tuneful, never over-ardent. His fastidiousness in prose did not prevent him from writing lyrics of a dainty, charming—one might say—artful naturalness. Surely that was no exaggerated publisher's blurb which described him as "the witty, comical, facetiously quick and unparalleled John Lyly."

JOHN LYLY

*Cards and Kisses*

CUPID and my Campaspe played  
At cards for kisses—Cupid paid:  
He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,  
His mother's doves and team of sparrows;  
Loses them too; then down he throws  
The coral of his lip, the rose  
Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how)  
With these, the crystal of his brow,  
And then the dimple of his chin:  
All these did my Campaspe win.  
At last he set her both his eyes—  
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.  
O Love! has she done this for thee?  
What shall, alas! become of me?

*Spring's Welcome*

WHAT bird so sings, yet so does wail?  
O't is the ravished nightingale.  
*Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu!* she cries,  
And still her woes at midnight rise.  
Brave prick-song! Who is't now we hear?  
None but the lark so shrill and clear;  
Now at heaven's gate she claps her wings,  
The morn not waking till she sings.  
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat  
Poor robin redbreast tunes his note!  
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing  
*Cuckoo!* to welcome in the spring!  
*Cuckoo!* to welcome in the spring!

JOHN LYLY

*Pan's Song*

PAN'S Syrinx was a girl indeed,  
Though now she's turned into a reed.  
From that dear reed Pan's pipe does come,  
A pipe that strikes Apollo dumb;  
Nor flute, nor lute, nor gittern can  
So chant it, as the pipe of Pan.  
Cross-gartered swains, and dairy girls  
With faces smug and round as pearls,  
When Pan's shrill pipe begins to play,  
With dancing wear out night and day:  
The bag-pipe's drone his hum lays by,  
When Pan sounds up his minstrelsy.  
His minstrelsy! O base! This quill  
Which at my mouth with wind I fill,  
Puts me in mind, though her I miss,  
That still my Syrinx' lips I kiss.

## SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

ENGLAND, 1554-1586

OF the close contemporaries of Spenser, we shall remember Sidney longest, both for his noble life and death, and for the high legacy he left to literature. His writings invade all the fields of literature covered by his age, save drama. His fancy is often artificial and his rhetoric is frequently walking on stilts. His *Arcadia*, styled by him "a trifle, and that triflingly handled", is a pastoral in prose, a romance of chivalric love. Lofty was his conception of chivalry—"high-erected thoughts in a heart of courtesy."

His *Defence of Poesy* is perhaps the first critical document in English that shows broad and exalted sympathy with the poetic spirit. It is famous for its praise of the early ballad, *Chevy Chase*. His *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets, although many of them are little more than exercises, were the first to hint what lyric fervor might pulse in the sonnet form. On their publication, Thomas Nashe gave this warning to the other sonneteers:

"Put out your rushlights, you poets and rhymers! and bequeath your crazed quatorzains to the chandlers! for lo, here he cometh that hath broken your legs!"

Shelley in his *Adonais* calls Sidney "a spirit without a spot." The English nation put on mourning at his death. They lamented not only the departed soldier and gentleman, but also lamented the loss of "something rare and beautiful that could never be recaptured", something that could never be properly transmitted to future ages.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

*Sonnets from "Astrophel and Stella"*

LOOK IN THY HEART

**L**OVING in truth, and fain in verse my love to  
show,  
That She, dear She! might take some pleasure of  
my pain;  
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make  
her know,  
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain:  
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,  
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain;  
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt  
brain.

But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's  
stay.

Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's  
blows;  
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.  
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my  
throes,

Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite:

"Fool!" said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart,  
and write!"

COME SLEEP!

Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,  
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,  
The indifferent judge between the high and low!  
With shield of proof, shield me from out the press

## SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:  
O make in me those civil wars to cease!  
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.

Take thou of me, smooth pillows, sweetest bed,  
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,  
A rosy garland, and a weary head:  
And if these things, as being thine in right  
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me  
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

### LEAVE ME, O LOVE

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;  
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;  
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:  
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.  
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might  
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;  
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light  
That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold; let that light be thy guide  
In this small course which birth draws out to death,  
And think how ill becometh him to slide,  
Who seeketh Heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.  
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:  
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me!

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

*Wooring Stuff*

**F** AINT Amoris! what, dost thou think  
To taste Love's honey, and not drink  
One dram of gall? or to devour  
A world of sweet, and taste no sour?  
Dost thou ever think to enter  
The Elysian fields, that dar'st not venture  
In Charon's barge? A lover's mind  
Must use to sail with every wind.  
He that loves, and fears to try,  
Learns his mistress to deny.

Doth she chide thee? 'Tis to show it,  
That thy coldness makes her do it.

Is she silent? Is she mute?  
Silence fully grants thy suit.

Doth she pout and leave the room?  
Then she goes, to bid thee come.

Is she sick? Why then, be sure  
She invites thee to the cure.

Doth she cross thy suit with 'No'?  
Tush! She loves to hear thee woo.

Doth she call the faith of man  
In question? Nay, she loves thee then.  
And if ever she makes a blot,  
She's lost if that thou hitt'st her not.

He that after ten denials  
Dares attempt no further trials,  
Hath no warrant to acquire  
The dainties of his chaste desire.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1557

*A Praise of His Lady*

**G**IVE place, you ladies, and begone!  
Boast not yourselves at all!  
For here at hand approacheth one  
Whose face will stain you all.

The virtue of her lively looks  
Excels the precious stone:  
I wish to have none other books  
To read or look upon.

In each of her two crystal eyes  
Smileth a naked boy:  
It would you all in heart suffice  
To see that lamp of joy.

I think Nature hath lost the mould  
Where she her shape did take;  
Or else I doubt if Nature could  
So fair a creature make.

She may be well compared  
Unto the Phœnix kind,  
Whose like was never seen or heard,  
That any man can find.

In life she is Diana chaste,  
In troth Penelopey;  
In word and eke in deed steadfast.  
What will you more we say?



## ANONYMOUS

If all the world were sought so far,  
Who could find such a wight?  
Her beauty twinkleth like a star  
Within the frosty night.

Her rosial color comes and goes  
With such a comely grace,  
More ruddier, too, than doth the rose,  
Within her lively face.

At Bacchus' feast none shall her meet,  
Ne at no wanton play,  
Nor gazing in an open street,  
Nor gadding as a stray.

The modest mirth that she doth use  
Is mixed with shamefastness;  
All vice she doth wholly refuse,  
And hateth idleness.

O Lord! it is a world to see  
How virtue can repair,  
And deck in her such honesty,  
Whom Nature made so fair.

Truly she doth so far exceed  
Our women nowadays,  
As doth the jeliflower a weed;  
And more a thousand ways.

How might I do to get a graff  
Of this unspotted tree?  
For all the rest are plain but chaff,  
Which seem good corn to be.

ANONYMOUS

This gift alone I shall her give—  
When death doth what he can,  
Her honest fame shall ever live  
Within the mouth of man.

THOMAS LODGE  
ENGLAND, 1558?-1625

*To Love*

LOVE guards the roses of thy lips,  
And flies about them like a bee;  
If I approach he forward skips,  
And if I kiss he stingeth me.

Love in thine eyes doth build his bower,  
And sleeps within their pretty shine,  
And if I look the boy will lower,  
And from their orbs shoot shafts divine. . . .

## GEORGE CHAPMAN

ENGLAND, 1559—1634

IF Chapman is not immortalized by his own poetry, he is by the great Keats sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*. Charles Lamb thought that "Chapman would have made a great epic poet, if indeed he has not abundantly shown himself to be one; for his Homer is not so properly a translation as [it is] the stories of Achilles and Ulysses re-written. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems would be incredible to a reader of mere modern translation."

Chapman made no secret of the effort that it cost him to climb Parnassus, or of his fiery resolution to reach the top. He refrained from publication till he was thirty-five years old, and then burst upon the world like a repressed and accumulated volcano. Saintsbury sums him up as "a remarkable dramatist, a poet of merit, and an altogether admirable translator." He was a wise, manly, but irregular genius. Among his achievements is the completion of the remarkable narrative, *Hero and Leander*, left half finished by Christopher Marlowe.

Too much pedantic love of learning, too much pride that would not let him please "the commune reader", too much verbiage, too many conceits of expression, encrusted the genius of him who was undeniably a spirit of fervent aspiration. Chapman's best verses are gnomic and didactic.

GEORGE CHAPMAN

*Bridal Song*

**O** COME, soft rest of cares! come, Night!  
Come, naked Virtue's only tire,  
The reaped harvest of the light  
Bound up in sheaves of sacred fire.  
Love calls to war:  
Sighs his alarms,  
Lips his swords are,  
The field his arms.

Come, Night, and lay thy velvet hand  
On glorious Day's outfacing face;  
And all thy crownèd flames command  
For torches to our nuptial grace.  
Love calls to war:  
Sighs his alarms,  
Lips his swords are,  
The field his arms.

SIR JOHN HARRINGTON  
ENGLAND, 1561-1612

*Of Treason*

**T**REASON doth never prosper: what's the reason?  
For if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

## SAMUEL DANIEL

ENGLAND, 1562-1619

THE publication of Daniel's sonnets in 1592 was an epoch in the history of the English sonnet. This was the first sequential body of poetry written in the English form invented by Surrey—three independent quatrains plus a couplet. Daniel set an example to Shakespeare in treating the sonnet as a stanza, connecting several of them as parts of a larger expression. The one beginning "Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night", is ranked among the best sonnets in the language. But their chief interest is found in their relation to Shakespeare's sonnets, several of which seem to have been built up from ideas suggested by those that Daniel addressed to one Delia.

Besides his sonnets, Daniel wrote much in prose and verse. He was unfortunate in choosing historical subjects for his more pretentious work, for he lacked narrative power. His genius is tender, meditative, dignified, peaceful.

### *Beauty, Time, and Love*

#### SONNETS

F AIR is my Love and cruel as she's fair;  
Her brow-shades frown, although her eyes are  
sunny;  
Her smiles are lightning, though her pride despair;  
And her disdains are gall, her favors honey:  
A modest maid, decked with a blush of honor,  
Whose feet do tread green paths of youth and love—  
The wonder of all eyes that look upon her,  
Sacred on earth, designed a Saint above.

SAMUEL DANIEL

Chastity and Beauty, which were deadly foes,  
Live reconcilèd friends within her brow;  
And had she Pity to conjoin with those,  
Then who had heard the plaints I utter now?  
For had she not been fair, and thus unkind,  
My Muse had slept, and none had known my mind.

Let others sing of Knights and Paladines  
In agèd accents and untimely words,  
Paint shadows in imaginary lines,  
Which well the reach of their high wit records:  
But I must sing of thee, and those fair eyes  
Authentic shall my verse in time to come;  
When yet the unborn shall say, *Lo, where she lies!*  
*Whose beauty made him speak, that else was dumb!*

These are the arcs, the trophies I erect,  
That fortify thy name against old age;  
And these thy sacred virtues must protect  
Against the Dark, and Time's consuming rage.  
Though the error of my youth in them appear,  
Suffice, they show I lived, and loved thee dear.

SAMUEL DANIEL

*Care-charmer Sleep*

CARE-CHARMER SLEEP, son of the sable Night,  
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born:  
Relieve my languish; and restore the light;  
With dark forgetting of my care, return!  
And let the day be time enough to mourn  
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:  
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,  
Without the torment of the night's untruth.

Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,  
To model forth the passions of the morrow;  
Never let rising sun approve you liars,  
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.  
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;  
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

## MICHAEL DRAYTON

ENGLAND, 1563-1631

**G**OLDEN-MOUTHED" DRAYTON was perhaps the most voluminous of the Elizabethan poets whose chief work is not dramatic. Besides bulk, it had variety, for he wrote pastoral eclogues, "legends", a sonnet sequence, "heroicall epistles", odes, and elegies—besides the works by which he will always be remembered, even if not read, namely the patriotic chronicle poem of the *Barrons Wars*, and the stupendous *Poly-Olbion or a Chorographicall Description of Tracts, Rivers, Mountains, Forests and other Parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britaine. With intermixture of the most Remarquable Stories, Antiquities, Wonders, Rarities, Pleasures, and Commodities of the same: Digested in a Poem by Michael Drayton, Esq.*

The very conception of such a multitudinous work is peculiarly Elizabethan, and not only industry but also a good deal of poetry went into the making of it. It ambles steadily, never excites, frequently wearies; but, on the whole, it is of surprisingly high merit, diversified with floral description, glimpses of rural sports, brave storytelling, and fanciful personification of rivers and mountains. It is the greatest topographical poem.

Specially memorable among Drayton's shorter pieces are the manly sonnet, "Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part", and also that war-song of Agincourt: "Fair stood the wind for France".

The verdict of Hazlitt upon Drayton is just and adequate: "His mind is a rich marly soil that produces an abundant harvest and repays the husbandman's toil; but few flaunting flowers, the garden's pride, grow in it, nor any poisonous weeds."



## MICHAEL DRAYTON

### *The Parting*

SINCE there's no help, come let us kiss and part—  
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;  
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,  
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.  
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,  
And when we meet at any time again,  
Be it not seen in either of our brows  
That we one jot of former love retain.  
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,  
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,  
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
And Innocence is closing up his eyes—  
Now if thus wouldst, when all have given him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

### *Immortality in Song*

HOW many paltry, foolish, painted things,  
That now in coaches trouble every street,  
Shall be forgotten, whom no poet sings,  
Ere they be well wrapped in their winding-sheet?  
Where I to thee eternity shall give,  
When nothing else remaineth of these days,  
And queens hereafter shall be glad to live  
Upon the alms of thy superfluous praise;  
Virgins and matrons reading these my rhymes,  
Shall be so much delighted with thy story,  
That they shall grieve they lived not in these times,  
To have seen thee, their sex's only glory:  
So shalt thou fly above the vulgar throng,  
Still to survive in my immortal song.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

*The Ballad of Agincourt*

FAIR stood the wind for France,  
When we our sails advance,  
Nor now to prove our chance  
Longer will tarry;  
But putting to the main,  
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,  
With all his martial train  
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,  
Furnished in warlike sort,  
Marcheth towards Agincourt  
In happy hour;  
Skirmishing day by day  
With those that stopped his way,  
Where the French general lay,  
With all his power.

Which in his height of pride,  
King Henry to deride,  
His ransom to provide,  
To the King sending:  
Which he neglects the while,  
As from a nation vile,  
Yet with an angry smile,  
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,  
Quoth our brave Henry then,  
"Though they to one be ten,  
Be not amazèd:  
Yet have we well begun;

MICHAEL DRAYTON

Battles so bravely won,  
Have ever to the sun,  
By Fame been raised.

"And for myself (quoth he)  
This my full rest shall be,  
England ne'er mourn for me,  
Nor more esteem me:  
Victor I will remain,  
Or on this earth lie slain,  
Never shall she sustain  
Loss to redeem me.

"Poictiers and Cressy tell,  
When most their pride did swell,  
Under our swords they fell:  
No less our skill is  
Than when our Grandsire great,  
Claiming the regal seat,  
By many a warlike feat  
Lopped the French lilies."

The Duke of York so dread  
The eager vanward led;  
With the main Henry sped,  
Amongst his henchmen;  
Exeter had the rear,  
A braver man not there.  
O Lord, how hot they were  
On the false Frenchmen!

They now to fight are gone,  
Armor on armor shone,  
Drum now to drum did groan,  
To hear was wonder;

## MICHAEL DRAYTON

That with the cries they make,  
The very earth did shake,  
Trumpet to trumpet spake,  
Thunder to thunder.

\* \* \* \* \*

Upon Saint Crispin's Day  
Fought was this noble fray,  
Which fame did not delay  
To England to carry:  
Oh, when shall Englishmen  
With such acts fill a pen,  
Or England breed again  
Such a King Harry?

## CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

ENGLAND, 1564-1593

**I**N the long reign of poetry has there ever been so immortally memorable a year as 1564, wherein both Marlowe and Shakespeare rose into Time—the shoemaker's son and the butcher's son!

Of this son of a shoemaker, one of the true aristocracy of genius, we know only a few noteworthy facts. One of the "wits" of Cambridge University, in London for the half-dozen years of his short career, author of some half-dozen plays during that time, certainly a reveler, accused of atheism, stabbed (as we now know) in a disgraceful tavern brawl over the payment of "the sum of pence", dead at twenty-nine! Had Shakespeare died in 1593, it is

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probable that Marlowe would now be looked on as the supreme poet of the Elizabethan age. Marlowe's literary failings, imperfections, omissions, are easily and often repeated; but "it is only Shakespeare who can do everything, and Shakespeare did not die at twenty-nine."

Marlowe was the true creator of the drama, the mightiest of Shakespeare's pioneers; and he was second only to the great one in imagination, originality, richness of phrase, poetic and dramatic power.

In Marlowe we are conscious on almost every page of the insatiable thirst for the infinite, the reaching to the stars, coupled with the command of magnificent, imaginative verse. His treatment of the "mighty" iambic blank-verse line is famous. Marlowe's genius stands secure in its own triumphant grandeur; although it is usually said that he developed his form of verse only to serve Shakespeare—only, as it were, to give Shakespeare an instrument fit to picture, immortally, the long sad, glad, mad procession of humanity.

The narrative poem, *Hero and Leander*, is full of glowing description and it rises to a high seriousness; we could better spare Shakespeare's longer narrative poems than this of Marlowe's.

The plays of Marlowe have a family likeness, each being concerned with a central character of more or less volcanic and superhuman aspiration. His heaven-scaling and hell-plunging heroes—Tamburlaine, Barabas, Dr. Faustus—are the projections of the poet's own titanic spirit. Perhaps (with his epic tendency toward sustained splendor and the pageant of color and form in the imagination, rather than toward the complexities of episode and the conflicts and minutiae of character) Marlowe, had he lived, might more fittingly have been the Milton of his age than the rival of Shakespeare.

The critics have had their fling at Marlowe, but the poets know his greatness. In the words of William Watson, "Violent, sinister, rebellious, unblest, Marlowe has something of the grandeur of a fallen angel about him; and, in the dayspring of our drama, he is Lucifer, son

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of the morning." Drayton's verse-tribute is in its own expression worthy of its subject:

"Next Marlowe, bathèd in the Thespian springs,  
Had in him those brave translunary things  
That the first poets had: his raptures were  
All air and fire—"

If in that age of brave aspiration and accomplishment, Shakespeare owed aught to Marlowe, let it be remembered that the creator of *Hamlet* was not indebted merely for a species of poetic expression, but also for the ladder to the stars, for a clue to the crossroads of the universe!

### *Who Ever Loved, That Loved Not at First Sight?*

FROM "HERO AND LEANDER"

IT lies not in our power to love or hate,  
For will in us is overruled by fate.  
When two are stripped, long ere the course begin,  
We wish that one should lose, the other win;  
And one especially do we affect  
Of two gold ingots, like in each respect:  
The reason no man knows; let it suffice  
What we behold is censured by our eyes.  
Where both deliberate, the love is slight:  
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?

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*From the First Sestiad of "Hero and  
Leander"*

ON Hellespont, guilty of true love's blood,  
In view and opposite two cities stood,  
Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might;  
The one Abydos, the other Sestos hight.  
At Sestos Hero dwelt, Hero the fair,  
Whom young Apollo courted for her hair,  
And offered as a dower his burning throne,  
Where she should sit, for men to gaze upon.  
The outside of her garments were of lawn,  
The lining purple silk, with gilt stars drawn;  
Her wide sleeves green, and bordered with a grove,  
Where Venus in her naked glory strove  
To please the careless and disdainful eyes  
Of proud Adonis, that before her lies;  
Her kirtle blue, whereon was many a stain,  
Made with the blood of wretched lovers slain.  
Upon her head she ware a myrtle wreath,  
From whence her veil reached to the ground beneath:  
Her veil was artificial flowers and leaves,  
Whose workmanship both man and beast deceives:  
Many would praise the sweet smell as she past,  
When 'twas the odor which her breath forth cast;  
And there for honey, bees have sought in vain,  
And, beat from thence, have lighted there again.  
About her neck hung chains of pebble-stone,  
Which, lightened by her neck, like diamonds shone.  
She ware no gloves; for neither sun nor wind  
Would burn or parch her hands, but, to her mind,  
Or warm or cool them, for they took delight  
To play upon those hands, they were so white.  
Buskins of shells, all silvered, used she,

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And branched with blushing coral to the knee;  
Where sparrows perched, of hollow pearl and gold,  
Such as the world would wonder to behold:  
Those with sweet water oft her handmaid fills,  
Which as she went, would cherup through their bills.  
Some say, for her the fairest Cupid pined,  
And, looking in her face, was strooken blind.  
But this is true; so like was one the other,  
As he imagined Hero was his mother;  
And oftentimes into her bosom flew,  
About her naked neck his bare arms threw,  
And laid his childish head upon her breast,  
And, with still panting rocked, there took his rest.

### *Helen*

FROM "THE LIFE AND DEATH OF DR. FAUSTUS"

*Dr. Faustus as the supreme desire of his selfish luxurious life calls up Helen out of the vasty deep. On seeing her beauty, he breaks forth in this remarkable apostrophe:*

WAS this the face that launched a thousand ships,  
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?—  
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!—  
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flees!—  
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.  
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,



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And all is dross that is not Helena.  
I will be Paris, and for love of thee  
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sacked,  
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,  
And wear thy colors on my plumèd crest;  
Yes, I will wound Achilles in the heel,  
And then return to Helen for a kiss.  
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air  
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!

### *An Idea of Wealth*

FROM "THE JEW OF MALTA"

**O** THAT of thus much that return was made,  
And of the third part of the Persian ships,  
There was the venture summed and satisfied.  
As for those Samnites and the men of Uz,  
That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,  
Here have I pursed their paltry silverlings.  
Fie; what a trouble 't is to count this trash!  
Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay  
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,  
Whereof a man may easily in a day  
Tell that which may maintain him all his life.  
The needy groom, that never fingered groat,  
Would make a miracle of thus much coin;  
But he whose steel-barred coffers are crammed full,  
And all his life-time hath been tirèd  
Wearying his fingers' ends with telling it,  
Would in his age be loth to labor so,  
And for a pound to sweat himself to death.

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Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,  
That trade in metal of the purest mold;  
The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks  
Without control can pick his riches up,  
And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones;  
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight;  
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,  
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,  
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,  
And seld-seen costly stones of so great price,  
As one of them indifferently rated,  
And of a carat of this quantity,  
May serve, in peril of calamity,  
To ransom great kings from captivity.  
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth;  
And thus, methinks, should men of judgment frame  
Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,  
And as their wealth increaseth, so inclose  
Infinite riches in a little room.  
But now how stands the wind?  
Into what corner peers my halcyon's bill?  
Ha! to the east? yes; see how stand the vanes?  
East and by south. Why then, I hope my ships  
I sent for Egypt and the bordering isles  
Are gotten up by Nilus' winding banks;  
Mine argosies from Alexandria,  
Loaden with spice and silks, now under sail,  
Are smoothly gliding down by Candy shore  
To Malta, through our Mediterranean Sea.

## CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

### *The Vaunts of Tamburlaine*

FROM "TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT"

*Milton never surpassed the elevation of the concluding lines of this first passage taken from the great Elizabethan play which antedated Shakespeare. It was most likely a joint-stock play, put together by Marlowe, Nash and perhaps half a dozen others; for there are two consecutive plays on the subject, and the modern theater is not unacquainted with this species of manufacture. Marlowe and Spenser were the first English poets who perceived the beauty of words; not as apart from their significance, nor upon occasion only, as Chaucer did. These fine swinging passages are frequently surrounded with swaggering and noisy fustian. Here Tamburlaine speaks:*

SO from the east unto the farthest west  
Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.  
The gallies and those pilling brigandines  
That yearly sail to the Venetian gulf,  
And hover in the Straits for Christian wreck,  
Shall lie at anchor in the isle Arant,  
Until the Persian fleet and men of wars,  
Sailing along the Oriental sea,  
Have fetched about the Indian continent,  
Even from Persepolis to Mexico,  
And thence unto the Straits of Jubaltâr.

\* \* \* \* \*

The world will strive with hosts of men-at-arms  
To swarm unto the ensign I support:  
Our quivering lances, shaking in the air,  
And bullets, like Jove's dreadful thunderbolts,  
Enrolled in flames and fiery smoldering mists,  
Shall threat the gods more than Cyclopean wars;

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And with our sun-bright armor as we march,  
We'll chase the stars from heaven and dim their eyes  
That stand and muse at our admirèd arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Meander:* Your majesty shall shortly have your wish,  
And ride in triumph through Persepolis.

*Tamburlaine:* "And ride in triumph through Persepolis!"

Is it not brave to be a king, Techelles?  
Usumcasane and Theridimas,  
Is it not passing brave to be a king,  
"And ride in triumph through Persepolis?"

\* \* \* \* \*

The god of war resigns his room to me,  
Meaning to make me general of the world:  
Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,  
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne.  
Wherever I come the Fatal Sisters sweat,  
And grisly Death, by running to and fro,  
To do their ceaseless homage to my sword.  
Millions of souls sit on the banks of Styx,  
Waiting the back return of Charon's boat:  
Hell and Elysium swarm with ghosts of men,  
That I have sent from sundry foughten fields,  
To spread my fame through Hell and up to Heaven.

\* \* \* \* \*

[*To the captive kings*]

I will, with engines never exercised,  
Conquer, sack and utterly consume  
Your cities and your golden palaces;  
And, with the flames that beat against the clouds,  
Incense the heavens, and make the stars to melt,

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As if they were the stars of Mahomet,  
For hot consumption of his country's pride;  
And, till by vision or by speech I hear  
Immortal Jove say "Cease, my Tamburlaine,"  
I will persist, a terror to the world,  
Making the meteors (that, like armed men,  
Are seen to march upon the towers of Heaven)  
Run tilting round about the firmament,  
And break their burning lances in the air.

\* \* \* \* \*

[*Here he speaks to the captive kings harnessed in his  
chariot.*]

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!  
What! can ye draw but twenty miles a day,  
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,  
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine—  
But from Asphaltis, where I conquered you,  
To Byron here, where thus I honor you!  
The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,  
And blow the morning from their nosterils,  
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,  
Are not so honored in their governor,  
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.  
Through the streets with troops of conquered kings,  
I'll ride in golden armor like the sun;  
And in my helm a triple plume shall spring,  
Spangled with diamonds, dancing in the air,  
To note me emperor of the threefold world,  
Like to an almond tree y-mounted high  
Upon the lofty and celestial mount  
Of ever-green Selinus quaintly decked  
With blooms more white than Erycina's brows,  
Whose tender blossoms tremble every one,

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At every little breath through heaven is blown.  
Then in my coach, like Saturn's royal son  
Mounted, his shining chariot gilt with fire,  
And drawn with princely eagles through the path  
Paved with bright crystal and enchased with stars,  
When all the gods stand gazing at his pomp;  
So will I ride through Samarcanda streets,  
Until my soul, dissevered from this flesh,  
Shall mount the milk-white way, and meet him there.  
To Babylon, my lords—to Babylon!

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564-1616

NOW we come to the world's greatest poet; and yet Robert Greene (a contemporary) in his *Grote's-worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, had the folly to call Shakespeare "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers." So little was Shakespeare honored in his own day by some of the feather-weights! Consider these typical flights:

*Lorenzo:* "There's not the smallest orb, which thou  
                  beholdest,  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims:  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

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*Cleopatra:* "I am fire and air: my other elements  
I give to baser life. So, have you done?  
Come then and take the last warmth of my lips.  
Farewell. . . ."

*Prospero:* "These our actors  
(As I foretold you) were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And like this insubstantial pageant faded  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep."

*Titania, when enamored of Bottom, a stupid fellow with  
an ass's head:*

"Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,  
While I thy amiable cheek do coy  
And stick musk roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
And kiss thy fair large eyes, my gentle joy."

FROM *Sonnets*: "Full many a glorious morning have I  
seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."

FROM *Sonnets*: "Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor  
boundless sea,  
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,  
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?"

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FROM *Twelfth Night*: "Come away, come away, death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away, breath,  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
O, prepare it!  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it."

What can we say of this Will Shakespeare in a brief space? We can only refer to the many facets of his glittering greatness. The passages which head this note indicate (insufficiently as a mere handful must) the surge and peal and clangor and cry of his varied verse, as well as the widely-darting sunrays of his imagination. Recollect that his genius was broad as the world, profound as man's thinking heart. It included the subtle-spinning spider Iago, the philosophic Hamlet, the magnificent buffoon Falstaff, the spotless Imogen, and those hundred others—Lady Macbeth, Brutus, Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Cordelia—enough to make a girdle of the globe. How, short of the idolatry that Ben Jonson eschewed, can we worship adequately the poet who wrote both *King Lear* and *The Tempest*, both *Twelfth Night* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, who could compose with equal success a *Love's Labor Lost* full of quaint euphuistic wit, a *Midsummer Night's Dream* of moonlight and folly and folk-lore, and a *Merchant of Venice* gorgeous as the Renaissance? How, short of idolatry, shall we worship the writer of the chief sonnets of his time, whose mere music, gainsaying sense, soars and sweeps with soul-satisfying flight? How shall we worship the dramatic genius who, knowing less of dramatic construction than Ben Jonson or many a college professor of our time, gave to his plays the supreme construction—that of life?

Shakespeare exhausts nearly all mortal experience and takes a few steps into the immortal world. He knows something of the strange secrets let out by death.



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His characters are legion, yet each one stands distinct. Each one represents a family, yet each one has his own uniqueness. He is a species individualized. He is of no special sect, no mere locality. Thus the plays are addressed to universal man.

Shakespeare searched the heart for its hopes, ambitions, rages, frailties, forces, despairs, hidden impulses. He comes with some kind of answer to all the questions besieging the mind of man, questions of love, hate, purpose, struggle, death, freedom, fate—all the origins, battles and issues of human life. He looks on all mortals with calm unpartisan eyes.

He has at times the sublimity of Milton, the humor of Chaucer, the fantasy of Spenser.

Shakespeare's most individual preeminence as a poet is in his imaginative use of word and phrase. How strikingly is the connotation of legal terms amplified in the great metaphor:

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past."

What instantaneous pity in

". . . those boughs that shake against the cold,  
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."

Where else shall we look for thick-strewn imagery of such scope as "the backward and abysm of time", of such power as "to move wild laughter in the throat of death", of such grim irony as that slow-waning moon that Theseus deploras,

"Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,  
Long withering out a young man's revenue."

Where can we find a more delicate expression of the evanescence of beauty than in

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"The uncertain glory of an April day."

Shakespeare seems to know all the might and mystery of words. Abstract thoughts leap out into visible images, fresh and glowing, like forms from the molder's furnace. You remember how Hamlet answers his mother's question, "What have I done?"

"Such an act  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;  
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,  
And sets a blister there; makes marriage-vows  
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed  
As from the body of contraction makes  
A rhapsody of words. Heaven's face doth glow,  
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,  
With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought-sick at the act."

It is interesting to know what the greatest modern Englishman has said of this astounding Shakespeare—interesting to know what Carlyle has said: "An English king, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments can dethrone! This King Shakespeare, does he not shine, in crowned sovereignty over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying signs? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen a thousand years hence."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Winter*

WHEN icicles hang by the wall,  
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,  
And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
And milk comes frozen home in pail,  
When blood is nipped, and ways be foul,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
    To-whit!  
To-who!—a merry note,  
While greasy Joan doth keel<sup>1</sup> the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,  
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,  
And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,  
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
    To-whit!  
To-who!—a merry note,  
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

<sup>1</sup> skim.

*Under the Greenwood Tree*

UNDER the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And tune his merry note  
Unto the sweet-bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
    Here shall he see  
    No enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

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Who doth ambition shun,  
And loves to live i' the sun,  
Seeking the food he eats,  
And pleased with what he gets,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see  
No enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

*Fairy Land*

I

OVER hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green:  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those rubies, fairy favors;  
In those freckles live their savors:  
I must go seek some dew-drops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

II

COME unto these yellow sands,  
And then take hands:  
Curtsied when you have, and kissed—  
The wild waves whist—

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Foot it featly here and there;  
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.  
    Hark, hark!  
    Bow, wow,  
    The watch-dogs bark:  
    Bow, wow.  
    Hark, hark! I hear  
The strain of strutting chanticleer  
Cry, Cock-a-doodle-doo!

III

WHERE the bee sucks, there suck I:  
    In a cowslip's bell I lie;  
There I couch when owls do cry.  
On the bat's back I do fly  
After summer merrily:  
    Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,  
    Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

IV

FULL fathom five thy father lies;  
    Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
    Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:  
        Ding-dong.  
Hark! now I hear them—  
        Ding-dong, bell!

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*Sylvia*

WHO is Silvia? What is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair and wise is she;  
The Heaven such grace did lend her,  
That she might admirèd be.

Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness:  
Love doth to her eyes repair  
To help him of his blindness;  
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,  
That Silvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling:  
To her let us garlands bring.

*Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind*

BLOW, blow, thou winter wind:  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude:  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.  
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then heigh ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly.

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Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
That dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot:  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remembered not.  
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then heigh ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly.

*Take, O Take Those Lips Away*

TAKE, O take those lips away,  
That so sweetly were forsworn;  
And those eyes, the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn!  
But my kisses bring again,  
Bring again;  
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,  
Sealed in vain!

*Aubade*

HARK! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,  
And Phœbus 'gins arise,  
His steeds to water at those springs  
On chaliced flowers that lies;  
And winking Mary-buds begin  
To ope their golden eyes:  
With everything that pretty bin,  
My lady sweet, arise!  
Arise, arise!

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*Fidele*

**F**EAR no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages:  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great:  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke.  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone—  
Fear not slander, censure rash;  
Thou hast finished joy and moan:  
All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!  
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!  
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!  
Nothing ill come near thee!  
Quiet consummation have;  
And renownèd be thy grave!



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Sonnets*

XXIX

WHEN, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possest,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least.  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising—  
Haply I think on thee; and then my state,  
Like to the Lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:  
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,  
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:  
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,  
Which I new pay as if not paid before.  
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

XXXIII

**F**ULL many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow;  
But out, alack, he was but one hour mine,  
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;  
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun  
staineth.

LXXIII

**T**HAT time of year thou may'st in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold—  
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
This thou perceiv'st which makes thy love more  
strong  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CVI

**W**HEN in the chronicle of wasted time  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rime  
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights;  
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,  
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,  
I see their antique pen would have exprest  
Even such a beauty as you master now.  
So all their praises are but prophecies  
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;  
And for they looked but with divining eyes,  
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:  
For we, which now behold these present days,  
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CXVI

**L**ET me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
Oh, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark,  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken:  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come:  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom:  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Sleep*

FROM "SECOND PART OF HENRY IV."

**H**OW many thousand of my poorest subjects  
Are at this hour asleep!—O sleep, O gentle  
sleep,

Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?  
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,  
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,  
And hushed with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,  
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,  
Under the canopies of costly state,  
And lulled with sounds of sweetest melody?  
O thou dull god! why liest thou with the vile,  
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch  
A watch-case, or a common 'larum-bell?  
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them  
With deafening clamors in the slippery clouds,  
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes?  
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;  
And in the calmest and most stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,  
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down;  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Mercy*

FROM "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE"

I

THE quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The thronèd monarch better than his crown:  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings.  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this—  
That, in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy.

*Moonlight and Music*

FROM "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE"

HOW sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Sit, Jessica; look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. . . .

Therefore, the poet

Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;  
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,  
But music for the time doth change his nature.  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,  
And his affections dark as Erebus:  
Let no such man be trusted.

*Queen Mab*

FROM "ROMEO AND JULIET"

O THEN, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.  
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes  
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone  
On the fore-finger of an alderman,  
Drawn with a team of little atomies,  
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:  
Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;  
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;  
Her traces, of the smallest spider's web;  
Her collars, of the moonshine's watery beams;  
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;  
Her wagoner, a small grey-coated gnat,

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Not half so big as a round little worm,  
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid.  
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,  
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,  
Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.  
And in this state she gallops night by night,  
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on courtesies straight;  
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;  
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,  
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.  
Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;  
And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,  
Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep:  
Then dreams he of another benefice!  
Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,  
Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon  
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes;  
And, being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two,  
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
That plats the manes of horses in the night;  
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,  
Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Life*

FROM "AS YOU LIKE IT"

**A**LL the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,  
Mewling and puking in his nurse's arms:  
Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eye-brow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice,  
In fair round belly, with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;  
His youthful hose well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion—  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Ay, but to Die*

FROM "MEASURE FOR MEASURE"

AY, but to die, and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts  
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!  
The weariest and most loathed wordly life,  
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment,  
Can lay on nature, is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

*Man*

FROM "MEASURE FOR MEASURE"

MAN, proud man,  
Dressed in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,  
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*A Royal Barge*

FROM "ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA"

THE barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumèd that  
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were  
silver,  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke and made  
The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
It beggared all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold of tissue,  
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see  
The fancy outwork nature: on each side her  
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
With divers-colored fans, whose wind did seem  
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
And what they undid did.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Spring Flowers*

FROM "THE WINTER'S TALE"

. . . O Proserpina,  
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall  
From Dis's wagon! daffodils,  
That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
On Cytherea's breath; pale primroses  
That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady  
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and  
The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,  
The flower-de-luce being one!

*Polonius Advises His Son*

FROM "HAMLET"

GIVE thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy,  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all: to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

### *Hamlet's Soliloquy*

**T**O be, or not to be, that is the question—  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them. To die—to sleep—  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to!—'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die—to sleep—  
To sleep!—perchance to dream!—ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

With a bare bodkin! Who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death  
(That undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns) puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.

*Oh! That This Too Too Solid Flesh Would  
Melt*

FROM "HAMLET"

O THAT this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!  
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature,  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead!—nay not so much, not two:  
So excellent a King; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother,

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on. And yet, within a month—  
Let me not think on't: Frailty, thy name is woman!—  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old,  
With which she followed my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears—why she, even she—  
O Heaven! a beast that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourned longer—married with my uncle,  
My father's brother; but no more like my father,  
Than I to Hercules. Within a month—  
Ere the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes—  
She married. O most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not, nor it can not come to, good;  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

### *Finale*

FROM "THE TEMPEST"

OUR revels now are ended: these our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind! We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*The Poet Greatly Pictured*

FROM "A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM"

I NEVER may believe  
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.  
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,  
That is the madman; the lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And, as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

*Epilogue to "Midsummer Night's Dream"*

NOW the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf behowls the moon;  
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,  
All with weary task fordone.  
Now the wasted brands do glow,  
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,  
Puts the wretch that lies in woe  
In remembrance of a shroud.  
Now it is the time of night,  
That the graves all gaping wide,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Every one lets forth his sprite,  
In the church-way paths to glide:  
And we fairies, that do run  
By the triple Hecate's team,  
From the presence of the sun,  
Following darkness like a dream,  
Now are frolic: not a mouse  
Shall disturb this hallowed house:  
I am sent with broom before,  
To sweep the dust behind the door.

*A Father's Fury*

FROM "KING LEAR"

**B**LOW, winds! and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!  
You cataracts and hurricanes! spout  
Till you have drenched our steeples.  
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!  
Crack nature's molds, all germins spill at once,  
That make ungrateful man!  
Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters;  
I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness:  
I never gave you kingdom, called you children:  
You owe me no subscription: why, then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure: here I stand, your slave;



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man;  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters joined  
Your high engendered battles, 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Let the great gods,  
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,  
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,  
Unwhipped of justice: caitif, to pieces shake,  
That under covert and convenient seeming,  
Hast practiced on man's life. Close pent-up guilt,  
Rive your concealing continents, and cry  
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man  
More sinned against, than sinning.

*Lear's Prayer*

FROM "KING LEAR"

O HEAVENS,  
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway  
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,  
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*A Mind Diseased*

FROM "MACBETH"

CANST thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart?

*Macbeth's Murder Meditation*

FROM "MACBETH"

IF it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly; if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself  
And falls on the other.

*Guilty Conscience*

FROM "MACBETH"

*Note in this terrific passage how the dread silence is suddenly broken by a dramatic knocking from without. Note also that I give to the last line before Lady Macbeth's re-entrance an unusual and powerful meaning by placing a dash before "one red."*

**M**ACBETH. Methought I heard a voice cry,  
"Sleep no more!  
Macbeth does murder sleep"—the innocent sleep,  
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleave of care,  
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast—

LADY MACBETH.

What do you mean?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

MACBETH. Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all  
the house:

"Glamis hath murdered sleep; and therefore Cawdor  
Shall sleep no more—Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

LADY MACBETH. Who was it that thus cried? Why,  
worthythane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think  
So brainsickly of things.—Go, get some water,  
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.  
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?  
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear  
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH. I'll go no more!  
I am afraid to think what I have done;  
Look on't again, I dare not.

LADY MACBETH. Infirm of purpose!  
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead  
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood  
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;  
For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*]

MACBETH. Whence is that knocking?  
How is't with me, when every noise appalls me?  
What hands are here! Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!  
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green—one red.

*Re-enter LADY MACBETH.*

LADY MACBETH. My hands are of your color; but I  
shame

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

To wear a heart so white. (*Knocking.*) I hear a knocking

At the south entry:—retire we to our chamber:

A little water clears us of this deed:

How easy is it, then! Your constancy

Hath left you unattended. (*Knocking.*) Hark, more knocking.

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,

And show us to be watchers:—be not lost

So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. (*Knocking.*)

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst.

*To-morrow*

FROM "MACBETH"

TO-MORROW, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*If Music Be the Food of Love*

FROM "TWELFTH NIGHT"

IF music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.  
That strain again! it had a dying fall:  
Oh! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odor. Enough! no more:  
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.  
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,  
That, notwithstanding thy capacity  
Receiveth as the sea: nought enters there,  
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,  
But falls into abatement and low price,  
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy,  
That it alone is high fantastical.

*She Never Told Her Love*

FROM "TWELFTH NIGHT"

SHE never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought,  
And with a green and yellow melancholy,  
She sat like Patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*To Gild Refinèd Gold*

FROM "KING JOHN"

**T**O gild refinèd gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
To smooth the ice, or add another hue  
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light  
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,  
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

*Sad Stories of the Death of Kings*

FROM "KING RICHARD II"

**O**F comfort no man speak:  
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth;  
Let's choose executors and talk of wills.  
And yet not so—for what can we bequeath  
Save our deposèd bodies to the ground?  
Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's,  
And nothing can we call our own but death,  
And that small model of the barren earth  
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.  
For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings:  
How some have been deposed, some slain in war,  
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,  
Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed—  
All murdered: for within the hollow crown  
That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp;  
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,  
To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks,  
Infusing him with self and vain conceit  
As if this flesh which walls about our life  
Were brass impregnable; and humored thus  
Comes at the last, and with a little pin  
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!

*So Work the Honey-Bees*

FROM "KING HENRY V."

SO work the honey-bees,  
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach  
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.  
They have a king and officers of sorts,  
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home;  
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad;  
Others, like soldiers, armèd in their stings,  
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,  
Which pillage they with merry march bring home  
To the tent-royal of their emperor:  
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys  
The singing masons building roofs of gold,  
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,  
The poor mechanic porters crowding in  
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,  
The sad-eyed justice with his surly hum,  
Delivering o'er to executors pale  
The lazy yawning drone.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Farewell to 'All My Greatness*

FROM "KING HENRY VIII"

**F**AREWELL! a long farewell to all my greatness!  
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;  
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,  
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
This many summers in a sea of glory,  
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride  
At length broke under me, and now has left me,  
Weary and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.  
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:  
I feel my heart new opened. O! how wretched  
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors.  
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,  
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,  
More pangs and fears than wars or women have;  
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,  
Never to hope again.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Mark Antony's Oration*

FROM "JULIUS CÆSAR"

FRIENDS, Romans, countrymen, lend me your  
ears;

I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them,  
The good is oft interrèd with their bones;  
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;  
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it.  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,  
For Brutus is an honorable man;  
So are they all, all honorable men,  
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;  
But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:  
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?  
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept:  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And, sure, he is an honorable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
But here I am to speak what I do know.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

You all did love him once, not without cause:  
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?  
O judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.

*There Is A Tide in the Affairs of Men*

FROM "JULIUS CÆSAR"

THERE is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat;  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

*Brutus*

FROM "JULIUS CÆSAR"

THIS was the noblest Roman of them all;  
All the conspirators save only he  
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;  
He only, in a general honest thought  
And common good to all, made one of them.  
His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Good Name*

FROM "OTHELLO"

**G**OOD name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:  
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed.

*Othello's Wooing*

FROM "OTHELLO"

**I** WILL a round unvarnished tale deliver  
Of my whole course of love. . . .  
Her father loved me; oft invited me;  
Still questioned me the story of my life  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes  
That I have passed.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;  
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe,  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
And portance in my travel's history:  
Wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch  
heaven,  
It was my hint to speak, such was the process;

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline. . . .

My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:  
She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished  
That Heaven had made her such a man: she thanked  
me;

And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake:  
She loved me for the dangers I had passed;  
And I loved her, that she did pity them.

### *Desdemona's Song*

FROM "OTHELLO"

THE poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Sing all a green willow;  
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow:  
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her  
moans;  
Sing willow, willow, willow;  
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones;  
Sing willow, willow, willow;  
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.  
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve—  
I called my love false love; but what said he then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow:  
If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

### *Othello Reviews His Career*

FROM "OTHELLO"

**I** HAVE done the State some service, and they  
know 't;  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice; then, must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;  
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,  
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes  
Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
Their medicinable gum.

## THOMAS CAMPION

ENGLAND, 1567?-1619

**T**HOMAS CAMPION, Doctor of Physicke", we select for special mention among the crowded galaxy of Elizabethan song-writers; for he was the most lyric of the lyric crew. His songs were intended to be sung, and of singable songs they are most persistently and changefully musical. Campion's first music-book, published in 1601, marks his position between the great outburst of Elizabethan passionateness and the classic grace of the early seventeenth century lyric. Ironically, being himself a rhymers, he has left us a treatise inveighing against rhyme in English poetry, urging the ancient quantitative versification.

## THOMAS CAMPION

### *Devotion*

**F**OLLOW thy fair sun, unhappy shadow!  
    Though thou be black as night,  
    And she made all of light,  
Yet follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow!

Follow her, whose light thy light depriveth!  
    Though here thou liv'st disgraced,  
    And she in heaven is placed,  
Yet follow her whose light the world reviveth!

Follow those pure beams, whose beauty burneth!  
    That so have scorched thee  
    As thou still black must be,  
Till her kind beams thy black to brightness turneth.

Follow her, while yet her glory shineth!  
    There comes a luckless night  
    That will dim all her light;  
And this the black unhappy shade divineth.

Follow still, since so thy fates ordained!  
    The sun must have his shade,  
    Till both at once do fade—  
The sun still proved, the shadow still disdained.

## THOMAS CAMPION

### *Vobiscum est Iope*

WHEN thou must home to shades of underground,  
And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,  
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,  
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,  
To hear the stories of thy finished love  
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,  
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,  
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,  
And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:  
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,  
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me!

### *Integer Vitæ*

THE man of life upright,  
Whose guiltless heart is free  
From all dishonest deeds,  
Or thought of vanity;

The man whose silent days  
In harmless joys are spent,  
Whom hopes cannot delude,  
Nor sorrow discontent;

That man needs neither towers  
Nor armor for defence,  
Nor secret vaults to fly  
From thunder's violence:



THOMAS CAMPION

He only can behold  
With unaffrighted eyes  
The horrors of the deep  
And terrors of the skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares  
That fate or fortune brings,  
He makes the heaven his book,  
His wisdom heavenly things;

Good thoughts his only friends,  
His wealth a well-spent age,  
The earth his sober inn  
And quiet pilgrimage.

SIR HENRY WOTTON

ENGLAND, 1568-1639

*Elizabeth of Bohemia*

YOU meaner beauties of the night,  
That poorly satisfy our eyes  
More by your number than your light,  
You common people of the skies;  
What are you when the moon shall rise?

You curious chanterers of the wood,  
That warble forth Dame Nature's lays,  
Thinking your passions understood  
By your weak accents; what's your praise  
When Philomel her voice shall raise?

You violets that first appear,  
By your pure purple mantles known  
Like the proud virgins of the year,  
As if the spring were all your own;  
What are you when the rose is blown?

So, when my mistress shall be seen  
In form and beauty of her mind,  
By virtue first, then choice, a Queen,  
Tell me, if she were not designed  
The eclipse and glory of her kind.

BARTHOLOMEW GRIFFIN

ENGLAND, 16TH CENTURY

*Fair Is My Love*

F AIR is my Love that feeds among the lilies,  
The lilies growing in that pleasant garden  
Where Cupid's Mount that well beloved hill is,  
And where that little god himself is warden.  
See where my Love sits in the beds of spices,  
Beset all round with camphor, myrrh and roses,  
And interlaced with curious devices  
Which her apart from all the world incloses!

There doth she tune her lute for her delight,  
And with sweet music makes the ground to move,  
Whilst I, poor I, do sit in heavy plight;  
Wailing alone my unrespected love—  
Not daring rush into so fair a place,  
That gives to her, and she to it, a grace.

SIR JOHN DAVIES

ENGLAND, 1569-1626

*Man*

I KNOW my soul hath power to know all  
things,  
Yet she is blind and ignorant in all:  
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,  
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.  
I know my life's a pain and but a span;  
I know my sense is mocked in everything.  
And, to conclude, I know myself a Man—  
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing.

THOMAS DEKKER

ENGLAND, 1570-1641

*The First True Gentleman*

FROM "THE HONEST WHORE"

PATIENCE! why, 'tis the soul of peace:  
Of all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to Heaven:  
It makes men look like gods. The best of men  
That ever wore earth about him was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit—  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

SIR ROBERT AYTON

SCOTLAND, 1570-1638

*To His Forsaken Mistress*

I DO confess thou'rt smooth and fair,  
And I might have gone near to love thee,  
Had I not found the slightest prayer  
That lips could move, had power to move thee;  
But I can let thee now alone  
As worthy to be loved by none.

I do confess thou'rt sweet; yet find  
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,  
Thy favors are but like the wind  
That kisseth everything it meets:  
And since thou canst with more than one,  
Thou'rt worthy to be kissed by none.

The morning rose that untouched stands  
Armed with her briers, how sweet she smells!  
But plucked and strained through ruder hands,  
Her sweets no longer with her dwells;  
But scent and beauty both are gone,  
And leaves fall from her, one by one.

Such fate ere long will thee betide  
When thou hast handled been awhile,  
With sere flowers to be thrown aside;  
And I shall sigh, while some will smile,  
To see thy love to every one  
Hath brought thee to be loved by none.

## JOHN DONNE

ENGLAND, 1573-1631

DONNE's poems were first collected in 1633. They cover an extraordinary range in subject—amorous, religious, satiric—and are distinguished by a strange originality, both fascinating and repellant. His poems are mainly the product of his youth. There is a solemn passionate earnestness about them, a quality which underlies the fanciful conceits which characterize and often mar them. Donne, whose contemporary reputation as a poet, and still more as a preacher, was immense, was the founder of a school of poetry which expressed and represented a certain over-intellectual bad taste of his day. He was Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, where he was buried.

Ben Jonson, censuring the poet's metrical license, called Donne the first poet in the world for some things. Donne would have been the first poet in many things had he been able to curb his wit, his realism, his prose energy. Too often his mind attempts to pull two ways at once, thwarting his purpose, tearing his subject to pieces. There is an irreconcilable struggle going ever on between his intense emotion and his witty intelligence.

Here is Coleridge's comprehensive epigram on Donne:

"With Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots,  
Wreath iron pokers into true-love knots—  
Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue,  
Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw."

JOHN DONNE

*Song*

GO and catch a falling star,  
Get with child a mandrake root,  
Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the Devil's foot;  
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,  
Or to keep off envy's stinging,  
And find  
What wind  
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou beest born to strange sights,  
Things invisible go see,  
Ride ten thousand days and nights  
Till Age snow white hairs on thee;  
Thou, when thou returnest, wilt tell me  
All strange wonders that befell thee,  
And swear  
No where  
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou findest one, let me know;  
Such a pilgrimage were sweet.  
Yet do not; I would not go,  
Though at next door we might meet.  
Though she were true when you met her,  
And last till you write your letter,  
Yet she  
Will be  
False, ere I come, to two or three.

## BEN JONSON

ENGLAND, 1573-1637

WE know Ben Jonson more intimately than we know any of his literary associates; for, besides numerous contemporary references supplying characteristic touches, his egotism make his works a gallery of self-portraiture. We have full information of his learning and his literary theories, his humors, his quarrels, his ailments, his incarcerations, his wit-and-drinking bouts. He was a "galleon built far higher for learning, solid but slow in his performances", whereas (the same Fuller tells us) Shakespeare was that "English man-of-war", able to take "advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." Jonson, though he probably guessed it not, would have been a splendid character for one of his own plays dealing with the idiosyncrasy of human nature. He was capable of extremes, could be gross and tender, rake-helly and studious, quarrelsome and devoted.

Jonson made a deliberate choice between kinds of writing, either of which his genius could have mastered. He might have been a romantic, but his stubbornly held and often arrogantly expressed theories caused him to become classicist and realist instead. The result is that although the bulk of his work is not facile reading, as a dramatist he ranks second only to Shakespeare among the later contemporaries of the bard. In a harsh, unsentimental type of comedy, he is supreme; the character of Sir Epicure Mammon is a masterpiece. *Sejanus* illustrates his theories of dramatic art in tragedy. In the masque, Jonson was unrivalled in his time for the wit, wisdom, and real poetry of his libretti; and only Milton could improve upon his instruction. In his prose, he was at daggers drawn with the fantastic, highflown, euphuistic style of the times; he



## BEN JONSON

attains the simplicity and lucidity of a later century; and although he derided the essayists, his *Discoveries* contain many gems of the essay form with ideas borrowed from Latin writers.

Jonson has been accused of being the greatest of all plagiarists. So I say of him in a little poem on books:

"So great his plunderings  
It placed him in the rank of kings."

If Jonson was a thief, what shall we say of Shakespeare, what of Chaucer, who would have disdained to tell a tale of his own devising? The question one must always ask is, "Has the borrower lifted and ennobled what he has appropriated?" If not, he deserves censure. But if he has found brick and left it marble, he deserves our gratitude.

Our interest in Jonson is as lyric poet rather than as dramatist. When he does achieve his occasional lyric excellence, he is superb. He pens "lyrics carved in marble, or rhymed cameos." Often, however, he achieves a freshness and sweet-smellingness quite unsurpassed. His last, unfinished, work, *The Sad Shepherd*, a pastoral play uniting fancifully the story of Robin Hood and a fairy tale, is among the delights of the Muse. Here sprightly wit is combined with poetic charm—all the more remarkable in that the play was written in his later years when he was sorely tried by failure and poverty. Having in mind the pensive music of *The Sad Shepherd*, as well as the best of his lyrics and of his epitaphs, we may with reverence echo the words upon his grave:

"O rare Ben Jonson!"

BEN JONSON

*Hymn to Diana*

QUEEN and huntress, chaste and fair,  
Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
Seated in thy silver chair,  
State in wonted manner keep:  
Hesperus entreats thy light,  
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade  
Dare itself to interpose:  
Cynthia's shining orb was made  
Heaven to clear when day did close:  
Bless us then with wished sight,  
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,  
And thy crystal-shining quiver;  
Give unto the flying hart  
Space to breathe, how short soever—  
Thou that makest a day of night,  
Goddess excellently bright.

*To Celia*

*This was a favorite with its author. And yet it so happens that "this airy and apparently spontaneous lyric", to quote John Addington Symonds, "is almost literally transmuted into rhyme and metre from scattered phrases in the prose of an old Greek sophist."*

DRINK to me only with thine eyes,  
And I will pledge with mine;  
Or leave a kiss but in the cup  
And I'll not look for wine.

BEN JONSON

The thirst that from the soul doth rise  
Doth ask a drink divine;  
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,  
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,  
Not so much honoring thee  
As giving it a hope that there  
It could not withered be;  
But thou thereon didst only breathe,  
And sent'st it back to me;  
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,  
Not of itself but thee!

*Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke*

UNDERNEATH this marble hearse  
Lies the subject of all verse,  
Sydney's sister—Pembroke's mother.  
Death, ere thou hast slain another  
Fair and wise and good as she,  
Time shall throw a dart at thee!

Marble piles let no man raise  
To her name in after days;  
Some kind woman, born as she,  
Reading this, like Niobe  
Shall turn marble, and become  
Both her mourner and her tomb.

BEN JONSON

*Simplex Munditiis*

**S**TILL to be neat, still to be drest,  
As you were going to a feast;  
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:  
Lady, it is to be presumed,  
Though art's hid causes are not found,  
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,  
That makes simplicity a grace;  
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:  
Such sweet neglect more taketh me  
Than all the adulteries of art:  
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

*She*

FROM "LOVE'S CHARIOT"

**H**AVE you seen but a bright lily grow  
Before rude hands have touched it?  
Have you marked but the fall of the snow  
Before the soil hath smutched it?  
Have you felt the wool of the beaver,  
Or swan's down ever?  
Or have smelt o' the bud of the brier,  
Or the nard in the fire?  
Or have tasted the bag of the bee? . . .  
O so white, O so soft, O so sweet is she!

BEN JONSON

*Greatness in Littleness*

FROM "AN ODE TO SIR LUCIUS CARY AND  
SIR H. MORRISON"

IT is not growing like a tree  
In bulk, doth make man better be;  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sear;  
A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May,  
Although it fall and die that night,  
It was the plant and flower of Light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see,  
And in short measures life may perfect be.

*To the Memory of My Beloved Master  
William Shakespeare, and What He  
Hath Left Us*  
[1564-1616]

TO draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,  
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;  
While I confess thy writings to be such  
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much.  
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways  
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;  
For silliest ignorance on these may light,  
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;  
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance  
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance;  
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,  
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.  
These are, as some infamous bawd or whore

## BEN JONSON

Should praise a matron. What could hurt her more?  
But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,  
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.  
I therefore will begin: Soul of the age!  
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!  
My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie  
A little further, to make thee a room:  
Thou art a monument without a tomb,  
And art alive still while thy book doth live  
And we have wits to read and praise to give.  
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses—  
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses;  
For if I thought my judgment were of years,  
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,  
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,  
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line;  
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,  
From thence to honor thee, I would not seek  
For names; but call forth thundering Æschylus,  
Euripides, and Sophocles to us;  
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,  
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread,  
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,  
Leave thee alone for the comparison  
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.  
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show  
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not for an age, but for all time!  
And all the Muses still were in their prime,  
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm  
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!  
Nature herself was proud of his designs  
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines.

## BEN JONSON

Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,  
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.  
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,  
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;  
But antiquated and deserted lie,  
As they were not of Nature's family.  
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy Art,  
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.  
For though the poet's matter nature be,  
His art doth give the fashion; and, that he<sup>1</sup>  
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,  
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat  
Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same  
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame,  
Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;  
For a good poet's made, as well as born.  
And such wert thou! Look how the father's face  
Lives in his issue, even so the race  
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines  
In his well-turnèd and true-filèd lines;  
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,  
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.  
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were  
To see thee in our waters yet appear,  
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,  
That so did take Eliza and our James!  
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere  
Advanced, and made a constellation there!  
Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage  
Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage,  
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like  
night,  
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.

<sup>1</sup> That he—that man.

RICHARD BARNEFIELD

ENGLAND, 1574-1627

*Philomel*

AS it fell upon a day  
In the merry month of May,  
Sitting in a pleasant shade  
Which a grove of myrtles made,  
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,  
Trees did grow and plants did spring;  
Everything did banish moan  
Save the Nightingale alone:  
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,  
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,  
And there sung the dolefullest ditty,  
That to hear it was great pity.  
*Fie, fie, fie!* now would she cry;  
*Tereu, Tereu!* by and by;  
That to hear her so complain  
Scarce I could from tears refrain;  
For her griefs so lively shown  
Made me think upon mine own.  
Ah! thought I, thou mournest in vain,  
None takes pity on thy pain:  
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee,  
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee:  
King Pandion he is dead,  
All thy friends are lapped in lead;  
All thy fellow birds do sing  
Careless of thy sorrowing:  
Even so, poor bird, like thee,  
None alive will pity me.



## JOHN FLETCHER

ENGLAND, 1579-1625

IT is now known that the collaboration of Beaumont and Fletcher included only a few of the vast collection of plays to which their names are attached, and that their versifications, once held indistinguishable, may usually be told apart. For instinctive lyric gift, however, the dramas of the two comrades are inferior to that specimen of Fletcher's lone hand, written in the youthful beginning of his career, *The Faithful Shepherdess*. Here some of the octosyllabics remind us of passages in the earlier Milton; and only seldom did Milton write more deftly, more deliciously:

"Thou divinest, fairest, brightest,  
Thou most powerful Maid, and whitest,  
Thou most virtuous and most blessèd,  
Eyes of stars, and golden tressèd,  
Like Apollo, tell me, Sweetest,  
What new service now is meetest  
For the Satyr? Shall I stray  
In the middle air, and stay  
The sailing rack, or nimbly take  
Hold by the moon, and gently make  
Suit to the pale queen of night  
For a beam to give thee light?  
Shall I dive into the sea,  
And bring the coral, making way  
Through the rising waves that fall  
In snowy fleeces? Dearest, shall  
I catch the wanton fawns, or flies  
Whose woven wings the summer dyes  
Of many colors? Get thee fruit?  
Or steal from heaven old Orpheus' lute?"

## JOHN FLETCHER

The many songs scattered throughout the plays, most of them ascribed to Fletcher, are of singable quality, and a round dozen of them would not have shamed Shakespeare.

There is an old belief, scarcely more than a tradition, that of this couple Fletcher was creator, Beaumont critic. Without too serious credence to this saying, we can recognize in Fletcher a fluency and elasticity touching all the stops of feeling; whereas in the poetry known to be Beaumont's alone, there is a hint of austerity and even of grandeur. I am thinking especially of the great epitaph *On the Tombs in Westminster* and of the poem *Upon an Honest Man's Fortune*, from which are the following terse lines. Note their solemn strength, their high finality:

"Man is his own star, and the soul than can  
Render an honest and a perfect man,  
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;  
Nothing to him falls early or too late:  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

### *Aspatia's Song*

LAY a garland on my hearse  
Of the dismal yew;  
Maidens, willow branches bear:  
Say, I died true.  
My love was false, but I was firm;  
From my hour of birth.  
Upon my buried body lie  
Lightly, gentle earth!

JOHN FLETCHER

*Hymn to Pan*

SING his praises that doth keep  
Our flocks from harm,  
Pan, the father of our sheep;  
And arm in arm  
Tread we softly in a round,  
Whilst the hollow neighboring ground  
Fills the music with her sound.

Pan, O great god Pan, to thee  
Thus do we sing!  
Thou who keepest us chaste and free  
As the young spring:  
Ever be thy honor spoke  
From that place the morn is broke,  
To that place day doth unyoke!

*Hear, ye Ladies*

HEAR, ye ladies that despise  
What the mighty Love has 'done;  
Fear examples and be wise:  
Fair Callisto was a nun;  
Leda, sailing on the stream  
To deceive the hopes of man,  
Love accounting but a dream,  
Doted on a silver swan:  
Danaë, in a brazen tower,  
Where no love was, loved a shower.

## JOHN FLETCHER

Hear, ye ladies that are coy,  
What the mighty Love can do;  
Fear the fierceness of the boy.  
The chaste Moon he makes to woo:  
Vesta, kindling holy fires,  
Circled round about with spies,  
Never dreaming loose desires,  
Doting at the altar dies:  
Ilion, in a short hour, higher  
He can build, and once more fire.

### *Melancholy*

HENCE, all you vain delights,  
As short as are the nights  
Wherein you spend your folly!  
There's naught in this life sweet,  
If men were wise to see't,  
But only melancholy—  
O sweetest melancholy!  
Welcome, folded arms and fixèd eyes,  
A sight that piercing mortifies,  
A look that's fastened to the ground,  
A tongue chained up without a sound!

Fountain-heads and pathless groves,  
Places which pale passion loves!  
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls  
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls!  
A midnight bell, a parting groan—  
These are the sounds we feed upon:  
Then stretch your bones in a still gloomy valley:  
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

## JOHN FLETCHER

### *Song*

FROM "VALENTINIAN"

CARE-CHARMING sleep, thou easer of all  
woes,  
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose  
On this afflicted prince; fall, like a cloud,  
In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud,  
Or painful to his slumbers; easy, sweet,  
And as a purling stream, thou son of Night,  
Pass by his troubled senses; sing his pain,  
Like hollow murmuring wind, or silver rain.  
Into this prince gently, oh, gently slide,  
And kiss him into slumbers like a bride!

## JOHN WEBSTER

ENGLAND, FLOURISHED 1602—1624

NOT even the birth-and-death dates of this illustrious Elizabethan dramatic poet are known. He was author of several plays and collaborator in several. His chief work is *The Tragedy of the Duchess of Malfy*, which with understandable enthusiasm has been pronounced "the finest tragedy in the English language outside the works of Shakespeare." Webster has a superficial resemblance to Baudelaire and Poe in his tendency toward the sepulchral and terrible. Whatever were his defects as a dramatist, he has claim to be recognized as one of the poetic geniuses of his time, one who had a peculiar affinity with Shakespeare. There is in him "a quality of pity for which outside Shakespeare and Webster we may look in vain"; and sometimes, like the master, he is capable

## JOHN WEBSTER

of fusing the poetic and the dramatic. Although remembered chiefly as the dramatist and poet of death, he has many passages of surprising tenderness and beauty. The horrors with which he is prodigal are of the soul; and the vices and crimes he paints have, notwithstanding their extravagance, an appearance of terrible reality.

Says John Addington Symonds: "Webster rises to Shakespeare's shoulder by his sincerity, nobility, and unerring truth to life in its most thrilling moments."

### *A Dirge*

CALL for the robin-redbreast and the wren,  
Since o'er shady groves they hover,  
And with leaves and flowers do cover  
The friendless bodies of unburied men.  
Call unto his funeral dole  
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,  
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,  
And (when gay tombs are robbed) sustain no harm;  
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,  
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

### *The Heart-cry of the Duchess*

FROM "THE DUCHESS OF MALFI"

O H, that it were possible we might  
But hold some two days' conference with the  
dead!  
From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure,  
I never shall know here. I'll tell thee a miracle:  
I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow:  
The heaven over my head seems made of molten brass,  
The earth of flaming sulphur, yet I am not mad.

## JOHN WEBSTER

I am acquainted with sad misery,  
As the tanned galley-slave is with his oar:  
Necessity makes me suffer constantly,  
And custom makes it easy.

### *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi*

HARK! Now everything is still,  
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill,  
Call upon our dame aloud,  
And bid her quickly don her shroud!

Much you had of land and rent;  
Your length in clay's now competent:  
A long war disturbed your mind;  
Here your perfect peace is signed.

Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?  
Sin their conception, their birth weeping,  
Their life a general mist of error,  
Their death a hideous storm of terror.  
Strew your hair with powders sweet,  
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,  
And—the foul fiend more to check—  
A crucifix let bless your neck:  
'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;  
End your groan and come away.

JOHN WEBSTER

*Vanitas Vanitatum*

ALL the flowers of the spring  
Meet to perfume our burying;  
These have but their growing prime,  
And man does flourish but his time:  
Survey our progress from our birth—  
We are set, we grow, we turn to earth.  
Courts adieu, and all delights,  
All bewitching appetites!

Sweetest breath and clearest eye  
Like perfumes go out and die;  
And consequently this is done  
As shadows wait upon the sun.  
Vain the ambition of kings  
Who seek by trophies and dead things  
To leave a living name behind,  
And weave but nets to catch the wind.

WILLIAM BASSE

ENGLAND, 1583-1653

*An Epitaph*

RENOWNÈD Spenser, lie a thought more nigh  
To learnèd Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie  
A little nearer Spenser, to make room  
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold Tomb.  
To lodge all four in one bed make a shift  
Until Doomsday, for hardly will a fifth  
Betwixt this day and that by Fate be slain  
For whom your curtains may be drawn again.



## WILLIAM BASSE

If your precedency in death doth bar  
A fourth place in your sacred sepulchre,  
Under this carvèd marble of thine own,  
Sleep, rare Tragedian, Shakespeare, sleep alone.  
Thy unmolested peace, unsharèd Cave,  
Possess as Lord, not Tenant, of thy Grave;  
That unto us and others it may be  
Honor hereafter to be laid by thee.

## WILLIAM DRUMMOND, OF HAWTHORNDEN

SCOTLAND, 1585-1649

DRUMMOND was essentially a man of letters, using "all the forces at the command of his exquisite nature to become a better poet than he ever could be." For most of his life he lived quietly at his home, nursing his sorrow for a dead love, and "brooding in discontent, for the most part silent, over the slow but certain triumph of Argyle and his Presbyterians." He corresponded with Drayton, and on a famous occasion was visited by Ben Jonson.

Drummond chose to write English rather than his native Scots. For the most part he used lyric measures, but his range was wide: "Amorous, Funerall, Divine, Pastoral". In his madrigals, and particularly in some of the sonnets upon his lost Mary Cunningham, Drummond showed command of grace and passion. His prose tract, *The Cypresse Grove*, a discourse upon Death, is often considered the finest product of his pen. Altogether, considering his scholarship and the metaphysical dangers of the time, Drummond must be admired for his comparative abstinence from the conceits of his age and for his frequent achievement of extreme beauty.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND

*Song*

PHŒBUS, arise!  
And paint the sable skies  
With azure, white and red:  
Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed  
That she thy career may with roses spread:  
The nightingales thy coming each-where sing:  
Make an eternal spring!  
Give life to this dark world which lieth dead;  
Spread forth thy golden hair  
In larger locks than thou wast wont before,  
And emperor-like decore  
With diadem of pearl thy temples fair:  
Chase hence the ugly night  
Which serves but to make dear thy glorious light.

This is that happy morn,  
That day, long-wishèd day,  
Of all my life so dark  
(If cruel stars had not my ruin sworn  
And fates not hope betray)  
Which, purely white, deserves  
An everlasting diamond should it mark.  
This is the morn should bring unto this grove .  
My Love, to hear and recompense my love.  
Fair king, who all preserves,  
But show thy blushing beams,  
And thou two sweeter eyes  
Shalt see than those which by Penéus' streams  
Did once thy heart surprise.  
Nay, suns which shine as clear  
As thou, when two thou didst to Rome appear.  
Now, Flora, deck thyself in fairest guise:

WILLIAM DRUMMOND

If that ye winds would hear  
A voice surpassing far Amphion's lyre,  
Your stormy chiding stay;  
Let Zephyr only breathe,  
And with her tresses play,  
Kissing sometimes these purple ports of death.

The winds all silent are,  
And Phœbus in his chair  
Ensaffroning sea and air  
Makes vanish every star:  
Night like a drunkard reels  
Beyond the hills, to shun his flaming wheels:  
The fields with flowers are decked in every hue,  
The clouds with orient gold spangle their blue;  
Here is the pleasant place—  
And nothing wanting is, save She, alas!

FRANCIS BEAUMONT

ENGLAND, 1586-1616

*On the Tombs in Westminster Abbey*

MORTALITY, behold and fear!  
What a change of flesh is here!  
Think how many royal bones  
Sleep within this heap of stones:  
Here they lie had realms and lands,  
Who now want strength to stir their hands:  
Where from their pulpits sealed with dust  
They preach, 'In greatness is no trust.'  
Here's an acre sown indeed  
With the richest, royallest seed  
That the earth did e'er suck in  
Since the first man died for sin:  
Here the bones of birth have cried—  
'Though gods they were, as men they died.'  
Here are sands, ignoble things,  
Dropt from the ruined sides of kings:  
Here's a world of pomp and state,  
Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

ANONYMOUS  
ENGLAND, LATE 17TH CENTURY

*Tom-o'-Bedlam's Song*

*Here are half a dozen stanzas from a curious and almost forgotten nonsense song come down to us from the rich reliquary of old English poetry. Study them: they will test your wits. Shakespeare and Ben Jonson mix a whiff of the spirit of this song into some of their admirable fooleries. We get a lilt of it in Scott's novel, "The Heart of Midlothian"; while we find four lines of the last stanza at the head of Poe's tale, "The Unparalleled Adventures of Hans Pfaall." John Galsworthy has plucked a title from this poetic crow's nest. Others have snatched chance feathers for their literary uses. Clement Wood, sketching the history of this song, says: "It is tardy time that the 'Tom-o'-Bedlam Song' be restored to its place as one of the few supreme mad songs of the language."*

FROM the hag and hungry goblin  
That into rage would rend ye,  
And the spirit that stands  
By the naked man  
In the book of moons, defend ye,  
That of your five sound senses  
You never be forsaken,  
Nor wander from  
Yourself with Tom,  
Abroad to beg your bacon.

## ANONYMOUS

I know more than Apollo;  
For oft, when he lies sleeping,  
    I behold the stars  
    At mortal wars,  
And the rounded welkin weeping.

The moon's my constant mistress,  
And the lovely owl my morrow;  
    The flaming drake  
    And night-crow make  
Me music to my sorrow.

When I want provant, with Humphrey  
I sup, and when benighted  
    I repose in Paul's  
    With waking souls,  
Yet never am affrighted.

With a host of furious fancies  
Whereof I am commander,  
    With a burning spear  
    And a horse of air  
To the wilderness I wander.

By a knight of ghosts and shadows  
I summoned am to tourney  
    Ten leagues beyond  
    The wide world's end—  
Methinks it is no journey.

## GEORGE WITHER

ENGLAND, 1588-1667

WITHER was a voluminous versifier, who has to his credit a few lyric collections and pastoral pieces, such as *Fair Virtue* and *Shepherd's Hunting*, which have kept his memory green. Elizabeth Barrett Browning extols Wither as "a poet who has been misprized by some of his own kind—a true sincere poet of blessed oracles." Had his last work been his lyric beginning "Shall I, wasting in despair", his merit as a fascinating lyrist would never have been challenged. It is generally conceded that the best of the voluminous writings of Wither's long life was produced in the span of years between 1613 and 1623. Wither is perhaps the type of the transitionists of seventeenth-century poetry, for after his Spenserian song and music, the repressive, "denying" force of the Puritan begins to be felt.

### *The Author's Resolution*

SHALL I, wasting in despair,  
Die because a woman's fair?  
Or make pale my cheeks with care  
'Cause another's rosy are?  
Be she fairer than the day,  
Or the flowery meads in May,  
If she think not well of me,  
What care I how fair she be?

GEORGE WITHER

Shall my silly heart be pined  
'Cause I see a woman kind?  
Or a well disposèd nature  
Joinèd with a lovely feature?  
Be she meeker, kinder, than  
Turtle-dove or pelican,  
If she be not so to me,  
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move  
Me to perish for her love?  
Or her well-deservings known  
Make me quite forget my own?  
Be she with that goodness blest  
Which may merit name of Best,  
If she be not such to me,  
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,  
Shall I play the fool and die?  
She that bears a noble mind,  
If not outward helps she find,  
Thinks what with them he would do  
That without them dares her woo;  
And unless that mind I see,  
What care I how great she be?

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,  
I will ne'er the more despair;  
If she love me, this believe,  
I will die ere she shall grieve;  
If she slight me when I woo,  
I can scorn and let her go;  
For if she be not for me,  
What care I for whom she be?



## WILLIAM BROWNE, OF TAVISTOCK

ENGLAND, 1591-1643

AT its best, Browne's poetry is like a breath of sweet country air, or the scent of newly mown hay. He undoubtedly knew Shakespeare personally, as he was one of that group of brilliant young men in Elizabethan London who called themselves "the sons of Ben Jonson." Brown was one of the direct inspirations of the young Milton, and of John Keats.

### *The Sirens' Song*

STEER, hither steer your wingèd pines,  
All beaten mariners!  
Here lie love's undiscovered mines,  
A prey to passengers—  
Perfumes far sweeter than the best  
Which make the Phœnix' urn and nest.  
Fear not your ships,  
Nor any to oppose you save our lips;  
But come on shore,  
Where no joy dies till Love hath gotten more.

For swelling waves our panting breasts,  
Where never storms arise,  
Exchange, and be awhile our guests:  
For stars gaze on our eyes.  
The compass Love shall hourly sing,  
And as he goes about the ring,  
We will not miss  
To tell each point he nameth with a kiss.  
Then come on shore,  
Where no joy dies till Love hath gotten more.

WILLIAM BROWNE

*Song*

**F**OR her gait, if she be walking;  
Be she sitting, I desire her  
For her state's sake; and admire her  
For her wit if she be talking;  
Gait and state and wit approve her;  
For which all and each I love her.

Be she sullen, I commend her  
For a modest. Be she merry,  
For a kind one her prefer I.  
Briefly, everything doth lend her  
So much grace, and so approve her,  
That for everything I love her.

*My Choice*

**S**HALL I tell you whom I love?  
Hearken then awhile to me;  
And if such a woman move  
As I now shall versify,  
Be assured 't is she or none,  
That I love, and love alone.

Nature did her so much right  
As she scorns the help of art.  
In as many virtues dight  
As e'er yet embraced a heart.  
So much good so truly tried,  
Some for less were deified.

WILLIAM BROWNE

Wit she hath, without desire  
To make known how much she hath;  
And her anger flames no higher  
Than may fitly sweeten wrath.  
Full of pity as may be,  
Though perhaps not so to me.

Reason masters every sense,  
And her virtues grace her birth;  
Lovely as all excellence,  
Modest in her most of mirth.  
Likelihood enough to prove  
Only worth could kindle love.

Such she is; and if you know  
Such a one as I have sung:  
Be she brown, or fair, or so  
That she be but somewhat young;  
Be assured 't is she, or none,  
That I love, and love alone.

## ROBERT HERRICK

ENGLAND, 1591-1674

**A**LTHOUGH Herrick—rector of Dean Prior Church, Devonshire—lived and sang three centuries ago, it was not until the close of the eighteenth century that England awoke to the fact that in him she possessed a poet of the rarest lyrical quality. Herrick himself never doubted the fact, stating it, perhaps not too modestly, in countless quatrains and couplets which were not taken at their face value during his lifetime. Many poets have announced their arrival, yet not arrived!

A classic sense for economy, smoothness, point; a fancy clothed in musical numbers; a knack of finding the unguessable but inevitable word; a training at the hands of Ben Jonson and a life part spent in rollicking London, part in that Devonshire he found dull—these are the factors and elements that make him the chief English pastoral poet and one of the most sunny and alluring of all English lyrists. With the Latin qualities of form, he mingles a charming homeliness of English subject and feeling. However Herrick himself may have affected to despise them, he made perennially beautiful the scenes, festivities, and sports of the countryside: the “hock-cart”, the hayfield, the may-pole, the wedding-cake, the wassail-bowl, the flowers—daffodils, violets, primroses, cherry-blooms, the animals—lamb, spaniel, cat, “learned pig.”

Being a royalist sympathizer, he was ejected from his church by Oliver Cromwell, and lived in London until 1662, when he was restored to his parish. He was buried there.

ROBERT HERRICK

*Corinna's Going a-Maying*

GET up, get up for shame! The blooming morn  
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.  
See how Aurora throws her fair  
Fresh-quilted colors through the air:  
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see  
The dew bespangling herb and tree!  
Each flower has wept and bowed toward the east  
Above an hour since, yet you not drest;  
Nay! not so much as out of bed?  
When all the birds have matins said  
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,  
Nay, profanation, to keep in;  
Whereas a thousand virgins on this day  
Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen  
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,  
And sweet as Flora. Take no care  
For jewels for your gown or hair:  
Fear not; the leaves will strew  
Gems in abundance upon you:  
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,  
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.  
Come, and receive them while the light  
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night;  
And Titan on the eastern hill  
Retires himself, or else stands still  
Till you come forth! Wash, dress, be brief in praying:  
Few beads<sup>1</sup> are best when once we go a-Maying.  
heads] prayers.

ROBERT HERRICK

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming, mark  
How each field turns a street, each street a park,  
    Made green and trimmed with trees! see how  
    Devotion gives each house a bough  
    Or branch! each porch, each door, ere this,  
    An ark, a tabernacle is,  
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,  
As if here were those cooler shades of love.  
    Can such delights be in the street  
    And open fields, and we not see 't?  
    Come, we'll abroad: and let's obey  
    The proclamation made for May,  
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;  
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day  
But is got up and gone to bring in May.  
    A deal of youth ere this is come  
    Back, and with white-thorn laden home.  
    Some have despatched their cakes and cream,  
    Before that we have left to dream:  
And some have wept and wooed, and plighted troth,  
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:  
    Many a green-gown<sup>1</sup> has been given,  
    Many a kiss, both odd and even:  
    Many a glance, too, has been sent  
    From out the eye, love's firmament:  
Many a jest told of the keys betraying  
This night, and locks picked: yet we're not a-Maying!

<sup>1</sup> green-gown] tumble on the grass.

ROBERT HERRICK

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,  
And take the harmless folly of the time!  
    We shall grow old apace, and die  
    Before we know our liberty.  
    Our life is short, and our days run  
    As fast away as does the sun.  
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,  
Once lost, can ne'er be found again;  
    So when or you or I are made  
    A fable, song, or fleeting shade,  
    All love, all liking, all delight  
    Lies drowned with us in endless night.  
Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,  
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

*To Daffodils*

FAIR daffodils, we weep to see  
    You haste away so soon;  
As yet the early-rising sun  
    Has not attained his noon.  
    Stay, stay  
    Until the hasting day  
    Has run  
    But to the evensong;  
And, having prayed together, we  
    Will go with you along.

ROBERT HERRICK

We have short time to stay, as you,  
We have as short a spring;  
As quick a growth to meet decay,  
As you or anything.  
We die  
As your hours do, and dry  
Away  
Like to the summer's rain;  
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,  
Ne'er to be found again.

*Whenas in Silks My Julia Goes*

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes,  
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows  
That liquefaction of her clothes.  
Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see  
That brave vibration each way free;  
Oh, how that glittering taketh me!



ROBERT HERRICK

*The Night-piece: To Julia*

HER eyes the glow-worm lend thee,  
The shooting stars attend thee;  
And the elves also,  
Whose little eyes glow  
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-the-wisp mislight thee,  
Nor snake nor slow-worm bite thee;  
But on, on thy way  
Not making a stay,  
Since ghost there 's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber:  
What though the moon does slumber?  
The stars of the night  
Will lend thee their light  
Like tapers clear without number.

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,  
Thus, thus to come unto me;  
And when I shall meet  
Thy silvery feet,  
My soul I'll pour into thee.

ROBERT HERRICK

*To Primroses, Filled with Morning Dew*

*I quote this poem because it has two or three good lines and also because it illustrates the use of the conceit in poetry—a vicious offence. In this lyric Herrick exceeds rhetorical propriety in attributing our human sorrow to the primrose on the slight pretext that it happens to be sprinkled with tear-like dewdrops. In the last two lines, he reaches the grotesque in suggesting that these “tears” of the primrose indicate that it has been brought forth from sorrow. This is neither true to the fact, nor true to the imagination.*

WHY do ye weep, sweet babes? Can tears  
    Speak grief in you,  
    Who were but born  
    Just as the modest morn  
    Teemed her refreshing dew?  
Alas! you have not known that shower  
    That mars a flower,  
    Nor felt the unkind  
    Breath of a blasting wind;  
    Nor are ye worn with years,  
    Or warped as we,  
    Who think it strange to see  
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,  
Speaking by tears before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimpering younglings, and make known  
    The reason why  
    Ye droop and weep;  
Is it for want of sleep,  
Or childish lullaby?

ROBERT HERRICK

Or that ye have not seen as yet  
The violet?  
Or brought a kiss  
From that sweet heart to this?  
No, no; this sorrow shown  
By your tears shed,  
Would have this lecture read:  
"That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,  
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought  
forth."

*His Prayer for Absolution*

FOR those my unbaptized rhymes,  
Writ in my wild unhallowed times;  
For every sentence, clause and word,  
That's not inlaid with Thee, my Lord,  
Forgive me, God, and blot each line  
Out of my book that is not Thine.  
But if, 'mongst all, Thou find'st here one  
Worthy Thy benediction;  
That one of all the rest shall be  
The glory of my work and me.

*A Thanksgiving for His House*

LORD, Thou hast given me a cell,  
Wherein to dwell:  
A little house, whose humble roof  
Is weather-proof,  
Under the spars of which I lie  
Both soft and dry;

ROBERT HERRICK

Where thou, my chamber for to ward,  
Hast set a guard  
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep  
Me while I sleep.  
Low is my porch, as is my fate,  
Both void of state;  
And yet the threshold of my door  
Is worn by the poor,  
Who hither come, and freely get  
Good words or meat.  
Like as my parlor, so my hall  
And kitchen small;  
A little buttery, and therein  
A little bin,  
Which keeps my little loaf of bread  
Unchipt, unflead.  
Some brittle sticks of thorn or brier  
Make me a fire,  
Close by whose living coal I sit,  
And glow like it.  
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,  
The pulse is Thine,  
And all those other bits that be  
There placed by Thee.  
The worts, the purslain, and the mess  
Of water-cress,  
Which of thy kindness Thou hast sent;  
And my content  
Makes those, and my belovèd beet,  
To be more sweet.  
'T is Thou that crownest my glittering hearth  
With guiltless mirth;  
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,  
Spiced to the brink.

## ROBERT HERRICK

Lord, 't is thy plenty-dropping hand  
That sows my land,  
And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,  
Twice ten for one:  
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay  
Her egg each day,  
Besides my healthful ewes to bear  
Me twins each year;  
The while the conduits of my kine  
Run cream for wine:  
All these and better Thou dost send  
Me for this end:  
That I should render for my part  
A thankful heart,  
Which, fired with incense, I resign  
As wholly Thine:  
But the acceptance—that must be,  
My Christ; by Thee.

### *To Dianeme*

SWEET, be not proud of those two eyes,  
Which, starlike, sparkle in their skies;  
Nor be you proud, that you can see  
All hearts your captives, yours yet free.  
Be you not proud of that rich hair,  
Which wantons with the lovesick air;  
Whenas that ruby which you wear,  
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,  
Will last to be a precious stone  
When all your world of beauty's gone.

ROBERT HERRICK

*To Ben Jonson*

AH Ben!  
Say how, or when  
Shall we thy guests  
Meet at those lyric feasts,  
Made at the Sun,  
The Dog, the Triple Tun?  
Where we such clusters had,  
As made us nobly wild, not mad;  
And yet each verse of thine  
Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine.

My Ben!  
Or come agen,  
Or send to us  
Thy wit's great over-plus;  
But teach us yet  
Wisely to husband it,  
Lest we that talent spend;  
And having once brought to an end  
That precious stock, the store  
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

*His Litany to the Holy Spirit*

IN the hour of my distress,  
When temptations me oppress,  
And when I my sins confess,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

ROBERT HERRICK

When I lie within my bed,  
Sick in heart, and sick in head,  
And with doubts discomfortèd,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

\* \* \* \* \*

When the artless doctor sees  
No one hope, but of his fees,  
And his skill runs on the lees,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,  
His, or none, or little skill,  
Meet for nothing but to kill,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

\* \* \* \* \*

When the priest his last hath prayed,  
And I nod to what is said,  
'Cause my speech is now decayed,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

FRANCIS QUARLES

ENGLAND, 1592-1644

*The Vanity of the World*

**F**ALSE world, thou lvest: thou canst not lend  
The least delight:  
Thy favors cannot gain a friend,  
They are so slight:  
Thy morning pleasures make an end  
To please at night:  
Poor are the wants that thou supplyest,  
And yet thou vauntest, and yet thou vvest  
With Heaven: fond earth, thou boasts; false world  
thou lvest.

Thy babbling tongue tells golden tales  
Of endless treasure;  
Thy bounty offers easy sales  
Of lasting pleasure:  
Thou askest the conscience what she ails,  
And swearest to ease her;  
There's none can want where thou supplyest;  
There's none can give where thou denyest.  
Alas! fond world, thou boasts; false world, thou lvest.

What well-advised ear regards  
What earth can say?  
Thy words are gold, but thy rewards  
Are painted clay:



FRANCIS QUARLES

Thy cunning can but pack the cards,  
    Thou canst not play:  
Thy game at weakest, still thou vvest;  
If seen, and then revyled, denyest:  
Thou art not what thou seem'st; false world, thou lvest.

Thy tinsel bosom seems a mint  
    Of new-coined treasure;  
A paradise, that has no stint,  
    No change, no measure;  
A painted cask, but nothing in 't,  
    Nor wealth, nor pleasure:  
Vain earth! that falsely thus complyest  
With man; vain man! that thou relyest  
On earth; vain man, thou dotest; vain earth, thou lvest.

What mean dull souls, in this high measure,  
    To haberdash  
In earth's base wares, whose greatest treasure  
    Is dross and trash?  
The height of whose enchanting pleasure  
    Is but a flash?  
Are these the goods that thou supplyest  
Us mortals with? Are these the highest?  
Can these bring cordial peace? false world, thou lvest.

*Delight in God Only*

I LOVE, and have some cause to love, the earth—  
    She is my maker's creature, therefore good.  
She is my mother, for she gave me birth;  
    She is my tender nurse, she gives me food:  
But what's a creature, Lord, compared with Thee?  
Or what's my mother or my nurse to me?

\* \* \* \*

FRANCIS QUARLES

To Heaven's high city I direct my journey,  
Whose spangled suburbs entertain mine eye—  
Mine eye, by contemplation's great attorney,  
Transcends the crystal pavement of the sky;  
But what is Heaven, great God, compared to Thee?  
Without Thy presence, Heaven's no heaven to me.

The highest honors that the world can boast  
Are subjects far too low for my desire;  
The brightest beams of glory are, at most,  
But dying sparkles of Thy living fire:  
The loudest flames that earth can kindle, be  
But nightly glow-worms if compared to Thee.

Without Thy presence, wealth is bags of cares;  
Wisdom but folly; joy, disquiet, sadness;  
Friendship is treason, and delights are snares;  
Pleasures but pain, and mirth but pleasing madness—  
Without Thee, Lord, things be not what they be,  
Nor have their being, when compared with Thee.

In having all things, and not Thee, what have I?  
Not having Thee, what have my labors got?  
Let me enjoy but Thee, what further crave I?  
And having Thee alone, what have I not?  
I wish nor sea, nor land, nor would I be  
Possessed of Heaven, Heaven unpossessed of Thee!

FRANCIS QUARLES

*Lord, When We Leave the World*

**L**ORD, when we leave the world and come to Thee,  
How dull, how slug are we!

\* \* \* \* \*

If Pleasure beckon with her balmy hand,  
Her beck's a strong command:

If Honor calls us with her courtly breath,  
An hour's delay is death:

If Profit's golden-fingered charm inveigles,  
We clip more swift than eagles:

Let Auster weep, or blustering Boreas roar,  
Till eyes or lungs be sore:

Let Neptune swell, until his dropsy sides  
Burst into broken tides:

\* \* \* \* \*

How fast and fearless do our footsteps flee!  
The lightfoot roebuck's not so swift as we.

HENRY KING, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER  
ENGLAND, 1592-1669

*From "Exequy on His Wife"*

**S**LEEP on, my Love, in thy cold bed  
Never to be disquieted!  
My last "good-night!" Thou wilt not wake  
Till I thy fate shall overtake;  
Till age, or grief, or sickness must  
Marry my body to that dust  
It so much loves; and fill the room  
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.

## HENRY KING

Stay for me there: I will not fail  
To meet thee in that hollow vale.  
And think not much of my delay:  
I am already on the way,  
And follow thee with all the speed  
Desire can make, or sorrows breed.  
Each minute is a short degree  
And every hour a step towards thee. . . .  
'Tis true—with shame and grief I yield—  
Thou, like the van, first took'st the field;  
And gotten hast the victory  
In thus adventuring to die  
Before me, whose more years might crave  
A just precedence in the grave.  
But hark! my pulse, like a soft drum,  
Beats my approach, tells thee I come;  
And slow however my marches be  
I shall at last sit down by thee.  
The thought of this bids me go on  
And wait my dissolution  
With hope and comfort. Dear—forgive  
The crime—I am content to live  
Divided, with but half a heart,  
Till we shall meet and never part.

GEORGE HERBERT

ENGLAND, 1593-1632

*Virtue*

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright—  
The bridal of the earth and sky!  
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,  
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave  
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,  
Thy root is ever in its grave,  
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie,  
My music shows ye have your closes,  
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like seasoned timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

## GEORGE HERBERT

### *Sin*

**L**ORD, with what care hast Thou begirt us round!  
Parents first season us; then schoolmasters  
Deliver us to laws; they send us, bound  
To rules of reason, holy messengers,  
Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,  
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,  
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,  
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises:

Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,  
The sound of glory ringing in our ears:  
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;  
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears!  
Yet all these fences and their whole array  
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

### *The Pulley*

*Even the great poets stumble sometimes. Here Herbert makes the mistake of using the word "rest" in the first line of the last stanza, having used the word in a wholly different meaning only two lines before. This rather sudden change in the meaning strikes one unpleasantly.*

**W**HEN God at first made Man,  
Having a glass of blessings standing by,  
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can—  
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,  
Contract into a span.

GEORGE HERBERT

So strength first made a way,  
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure:  
When almost all was out, God made a stay,  
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,  
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)  
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,  
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,  
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;  
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,  
But keep them with repining restlessness:  
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
May toss him to My breast.

*The Elixir*

TEACH me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see;  
And what I do in anything  
To do it as for Thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

All may of Thee partake  
Nothing can be so mean  
Which with his tincture, 'for Thy sake,'  
Will not grow bright and clean.

GEORGE HERBERT

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine:  
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.

*From "The Flower"*

AND now in age I bud again,  
After so many deaths I live and write:  
I once more smell the dew and rain,  
And relish versing: O my only Light,  
It cannot be  
That I am he  
On whom Thy tempests fell all night.



JAMES SHIRLEY

ENGLAND, 1596-1666

*Death, the Leveller*

THE glories of our blood and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things:  
There is no armor against Fate:  
Death lays his icy hand on kings:  
Sceptre and Crown  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crookèd scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,  
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;  
But their strong nerves at last must yield:  
They tame but one another still:  
Early or late  
They stoop to fate,  
And must give up their murmuring breath  
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow:  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!  
Upon Death's purple altar now  
See where the victor-victim bleeds.  
Your heads must come  
To the cold tomb:  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

## THOMAS CAREW

ENGLAND, 1598?-1639?

ONE of the famed poets of England during the reign of Charles I, Carew deserves mention chiefly as the precursor and representative of what may be called the courtier and conventional school of poetry. His poems, mostly lyrical, and treating of slight subjects, are among the best of their kind, and exhibit much fancy and feeling. I select Carew, along with Herrick, for special mention among the group of "cavalier lyrists", because of his special pains in perfecting his verses, and because he "holds Shakespeare with one hand and Congreve with the other"; that is, he had the Elizabethan ardor combined with the sense of form.

### *Song*

ASK me no more where Jove bestows,  
When June is past, the fading rose;  
For in your beauty's orient deep  
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray  
The golden atoms of the day;  
For in pure love Heaven did prepare  
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste  
The nightingale when May is past;  
For in your sweet dividing throat  
She winters and keeps warm her note.

THOMAS CAREW

Ask me no more where those stars 'light  
That downward fall in dead of night;  
For in your eyes they sit, and there  
Fixèd become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west  
The Phœnix builds her spicy nest;  
For unto you at last she flies,  
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

*Mediocrity in Love Rejected*

GIVE me more love, or more disdain;  
The torrid or the frozen zone  
Bring equal ease unto my pain,  
The temperate affords me none:  
Either extreme, of love or hate,  
Is sweeter than a calm estate.

Give me a storm, if it be love:  
Like Danaë in that golden shower,  
I'll swim in pleasure; if it prove  
Disdain, that torrent will devour  
My vulture hopes; and he's possessed  
Of Heaven, that is from Hell released.  
Then crown my joys, or cure my pain:  
Give me more love, or more disdain.

THOMAS CAREW

*The Unfading Beauty*

HE that loves a rosy cheek,  
Or a coral lip admires,  
Or from star-like eyes doth seek  
Fuel to maintain his fires,  
As old Time makes these decay,  
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,  
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,  
Hearts with equal love combined,  
Kindle never-dying fires.  
Where these are not, I despise  
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

THOMAS CAREW

*Ungrateful Beauty Threatened*

**K**NOW, Celia, since thou art so proud,  
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown.  
Thou hadst in the forgotten crowd  
Of common beauties lived unknown,  
Had not my verse extolled thy name,  
And with it impeded the wings of Fame.

That killing power is none of thine:  
I gave it to thy voice and eyes;  
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine:  
Thou art my star, shinest in my skies:  
Then dart not from thy borrowed sphere  
Lightning on him that fixed thee there.

Tempt me with such affrights no more;  
Lest what I made I uncreate:  
Let fools thy mystic forms adore,  
I know thee in thy mortal state:  
Wise poets that wrapt Truth in tales,  
Knew her themselves through all her veils.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1599

THESE lines were incorporated by Shakespeare in *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

*Crabbed Age and Youth*

C RABBÈD Age and Youth  
Cannot live together:  
Youth is full of pleasance,  
Age is full of care;  
Youth like summer morn,  
Age like winter weather;  
Youth like summer brave,  
Age like winter bare.

Youth is full of sport,  
Age's breath is short;  
Youth is nimble, Age is lame;  
Youth is hot and bold,  
Age is weak and cold;  
Youth is wild, and Age is tame.  
Age, I do abhor thee;  
Youth, I do adore thee:  
Oh, my Love, my Love is young!  
Age, I do defy thee:  
O, sweet shepherd, hie thee!  
For methinks thou stayest too long.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1602

*Madrigal*

MY Love in her attire doth show her wit,  
It doth so well become her;  
For every season she hath dressings fit,  
For Winter, Spring, and Summer.  
No beauty she doth miss  
When all her robes are on:  
But Beauty's self she is  
When all her robes are gone.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1605

*To Love*

FAIN would I change that note  
To which fond love hath charmed me,  
Long, long to sing by rote,  
Fancying that that harmed me:  
Yet when this thought doth come-  
Love is the perfect sum  
Of all delight.  
I have no other choice  
Either for pen or voice  
To sing or write.

## ANONYMOUS

O Love, they wrong thee much  
That say thy sweet is bitter,  
When thy rich fruit is such  
As nothing can be sweeter.  
Fair house of joy and bliss  
Where truest pleasure is,  
I do adore thee:  
I know thee where thou art,  
I serve thee with my heart,  
And fall before thee.

## THOMAS RANDOLPH

ENGLAND, 1605-1635

**H**IS wit and learning endeared him to Ben Jonson, who adopted Randolph as a tribal son of the Muses. Abundantly endowed with intellect and imagination, had he lived longer Randolph might have been a dangerous rival of or a master to Dryden. "He showed no precosity of genius, but was gradually gathering his singing-ropes about him," when he died. Twenty-nine has been a tragic age for poets; at twenty-nine Marlowe and Shelley died, and although Randolph did not approach even the lesser of these two, he was allowed least of all to develop the promise of greatness within him.



THOMAS RANDOLPH

*Love and Reverence*

I HAVE a mistress, for perfections rare  
In every eye, but in my thoughts most fair.  
Like tapers on the altar shine her eyes;  
Her breath is the perfume of sacrifice;  
And wheresoe'er my fancy would begin,  
Still her perfection lets religion in.  
We sit and talk, and kiss away the hours  
As chastely as the morning dews kiss flowers:  
I touch her, like my beads, with devout care,  
And come unto my courtship as my prayer.

EDMUND WALLER

ENGLAND, 1606-1687

*Go, Lovely Rose*

GO, lovely Rose,  
Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
That now she knows,  
When I resemble her to thee,  
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,  
And shuns to have her graces spied,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In deserts where no men abide,  
Thou must have uncommended died.

EDMUND WALLER

Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retired:  
Bid her come forth,  
Suffer herself to be desired,  
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die—that she  
The common fate of all things rare  
May read in thee:  
How small a part of time they share  
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

*Old Age*

THE seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;  
So calm are we when passions are no more.  
For then we know how vain it was to boast  
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.  
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes  
Conceal that emptiness which age describes.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lets in new light through chinks that Time hath made:  
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become  
As they draw near to their eternal home.  
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view  
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1607

*There Is a Lady Sweet and Kind*

THERE is a Lady sweet and kind,  
Was never face so pleased my mind:  
I did but see her passing by,  
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion and her smiles,  
Her wit, her voice my heart beguiles,  
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,  
And yet I love her till I die.

Cupid is wingèd and doth range,  
Her country so my love doth change;  
But change she earth, or change she sky,  
Ye<sup>e</sup> will I love her till I die.

## JOHN MILTON

ENGLAND, 1608-1674

MILTON—the battling Milton—is the most dramatic figure in English literature. His life was tragedy; his height of achievement as a poet has simply not been surpassed in any tongue.

There were two great souls struggling in Milton: that was his tragedy. The wrestle was between the pure poetic genius evinced even in his earliest writing, and the spirit of righteousness fully summoned up in him by the rising of the Puritans. He dedicated himself to the cause he thought to be just, repressed the poetry in his veins until that cause was lost; then in seclusion he set himself to the great task envisioned long before—the epic which was to be the consummation of his powers and in which he hoped to justify the conclusions of his soul.

There is a musical basis unmistakable in all of Milton's poetry; it is notable from the beginning of his creative life. His father was a musician, and there is copious testimony to Milton's personal thrall to music. He also wandered much in the fragrant and colored gardens of Elizabethan and later poetry. His nature was always serious, but in the spring-tides of his life, he possessed a grace of mind, a chaste appreciation of the sensuous; and he was never actually a truer poet. In the six-year period spent at Horton (a small village on the river Colne near London) after his sojourn at Cambridge—a period Milton called "absolute leisure", the poet was subjecting himself to a thorough study of classic literatures and to what he himself doubtless considered the apprenticeship of his talents. But his 'prentice verses are imperishable.

## JOHN MILTON

A scholar of the lamp, Milton felt more sharply than dwellers of the countryside the natural charm of hills and woods and the homely piquancy of rural life. This does not imply, to be sure, that he had a keener nature observation. But the complementary descriptive poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, expressing respectively the brighter and the more subdued aspects of the scholar's life, are remarkable for their fusion of book-learnedness with imagination quickened by the sunlight and twilight of the country.

To the Horton period belongs the masque *Comus* with its magic:

"The sounds and seas, with all their finny droves,  
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;  
And, on the tawny sands and shelves,  
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves."

Here, too, belongs *Lycidas*, surely in some ways the finest elegy in our language. It has "majestic progressions, large passages of sound", intricate spell of rhyme noble sorrow. The sudden intrusion, in the midst of this lament, of a grim, almost grotesque, but grand and passionate invective against the corrupt clergy, casts a shadow far into the future, to the time when, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton was to utter many thunders, justifying the ways of God to man.

In Italy, a few months after writing *Lycidas*, Milton heard of the gathering clouds of civil war in England. As if in response to a summons, he returned home, and probably he never knew happiness again, although he worked zealously for Cromwell's party. The devastating years followed: his first marriage, unhappy; his second, blighted by bereavement; finally, his third, comfortable and permanent, but too late for sweetness. Under Cromwell, his political secretaryship was due to his position in the thick of pamphlet controversy, wherein occasionally, as in pages of the *Areopagitica*, he reaches passionate eloquence, but more often harangues "with a vengeful

## JOHN MILTON

fury that would have delighted Calvin." Loss of sight, the overthrow of the Puritan party, the destruction or captivity of his friends, self-concealment and final retirement in loneliness of spirit—these cap the influences which changed Milton from the winning, half-pagan scholar of Horton to the soured man who dictated—to his unhappy daughters—the pages of *Paradise Lost*.

Evidences of this change, ample in *Paradise Lost*, are strongest in Milton's great tragedy after the Greek model, *Samson Agonistes*, where Samson, helpless and indomitable, is Milton. This trait of irreconcilableness is strong in these late works of the poet: the preeminence of Satan in *Paradise Lost* is due to his persistence in spite of assured defeat. But the dignity and splendor of Milton's verse, and the passion in his utterance sustain these somber masterpieces. This is a region where darkness and smoke undeniably obscure the air; but there is a wild light blazing awfully across the heavens, revealing vistas vast and mysterious. For Milton to the end retained the gift of intense lyrical expression, which is the essence of all poetry.

There has been a tendency of late among the light-minded literati and the petty poetasters to attack the reputations of certain great figures of our heritage such as Tennyson and Milton. These fastidious critics are usually of the sort whose anxiety to get a hearing is equalled only by the ineffable mediocrity of their performance in respect to slovenly lines, shoddy reporting (called "observation") and feeble thought. Themselves of relaxed minds and modes of living, and incapable of the patience or discrimination to school themselves, they despise Milton's austerity and scout the result of his long period of study. They proclaim "new" poetry; Milton knew that poetry always builds on what has been. Milton's "vagueness", his "organ-tones", his "easy" blank verse, are the bait and butt of these radicals. Let them make merry in the darkness, for tomorrow's sun, which will show Milton proud and serene, will shrivel them up.

JOHN MILTON

*On His Blindness*

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide:  
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait."

*An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic  
Poet, W. Shakespeare*

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honored  
bones—  
The labor of an age in pilèd stones?  
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid  
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?  
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,  
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?  
Thou in our wonder and astonishment  
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.

## JOHN MILTON

For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavoring art,  
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book  
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,  
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,  
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;  
And, so sepúlchered, in such pomp dost lie,  
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

### *At a Solemn Music*

**B**LEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,  
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,  
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ  
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce,  
And to our high-raised phantasy present  
That undisturbèd Song of pure content,  
Aye sung before the sapphire-colored throne  
To Him that sits thereon  
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee,  
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row  
Their loud up-lifted angel trumpets blow;  
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,  
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms,  
Hymns devout and holy psalms  
Singing everlastingly;  
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice  
May rightly answer that melodious noise;  
As once we did, till disproportioned sin  
Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din  
Broke the fair music that all creatures made  
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed



## JOHN MILTON

In perfect diapason, whilst they stood  
In first obedience, and their state of good.  
O may we soon again renew that Song,  
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long  
To his celestial concert us unite,  
To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light!

### *L'Allegro*

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,  
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,  
In Stygian cave forlorn,  
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks and sights  
unholy!  
Find out some uncouth cell,  
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous  
wings,  
And the night-raven sings;  
There under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,  
As ragged as thy locks,  
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.  
But come, thou goddess fair and free,  
In heaven ycleped Euphrosyne,  
And, by men, heart-easing Mirth;  
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,  
With two sister Graces more,  
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;  
Or whether (as some sager sing)  
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,  
Zephyr, with Aurora playing—  
As he met her once a-Maying—  
There, on beds of violets blue  
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,  
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,  
So buxom, blithe and debonair.

## JOHN MILTON

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee  
Jest and youthful Jollity—  
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,  
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,  
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
And love to live in dimple sleek—  
Sport, that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter, holding both his sides.  
Come! and trip it, as you go,  
On the light fantastic toe;  
And in thy right hand lead with thee  
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;  
And if I give thee honor due,  
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,  
To live with her, and live with thee,  
In unreprovèd pleasures free—  
To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull Night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;  
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,  
And at my window bid good morrow,  
Through the sweet-brier, or the vine,  
Or the twisted eglantine;  
While the cock with lively din  
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,  
And to the stack, or the barn door,  
Stoutly struts his dames before;  
Oft listening how the hounds and horn  
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill  
Through the high wood echoing shrill;  
Sometime walking, not unseen,  
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,  
Right against the eastern gate,

## JOHN MILTON

Where the great Sun begins his state,  
Robed in flames and amber light,  
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;  
While the plowman, near at hand,  
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,  
And the mower whets his scythe,  
And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,  
Whilst the landscape round it measures:  
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray—  
Mountains, on whose barren breast  
The laboring clouds do often rest—  
Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.  
Towers and battlements it sees  
Bosomed high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some beauty lies,  
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.  
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes  
From betwixt two aged oaks,  
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,  
Are at their savory dinner set  
Of herbs, and other country messes,  
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;  
And then in haste her bower she leaves,  
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;  
Or, if the earliest season lead,  
To the tanned haycock in the mead.  
Sometimes with secure delight  
The upland hamlets will invite,  
When the merry bells ring round,

## JOHN MILTON

And the jocund rebecks sound  
To many a youth and many a maid,  
Dancing in the checkered shade;  
And young and old come forth to play  
On a sunshine holiday,  
Till the livelong daylight fail;  
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale  
With stories told of many a feat:  
How fairy Mab the junkets eat—  
She was pinched and pulled, she said,  
And he, by friar's lantern led;  
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat  
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,  
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,  
His shadowy flail hath thrashed the corn  
That ten day-laborers could not end;  
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,  
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,  
And, crop-full, out of doors he flings  
Ere the first cock his matin rings.

Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,  
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.  
Towered cities please us then,  
And the busy hum of men,  
Where throngs of knights and barons bold  
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold—  
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes  
Rain influence, and judge the prize  
Of wit or arms, while both contend  
To win her grace whom all commend.  
There let Hymen oft appear  
In saffron robe, with taper clear,  
And pomp and feast and revelry,

## JOHN MILTON

With masque and antique pageantry—  
Such sights as youthful poets dream  
On summer eves by haunted stream;  
Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
If Jonson's learnèd sock be on,  
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And ever, against eating cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
Married to immortal verse—  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,  
In notes with many a winding bout  
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,  
With wanton heed and giddy cunning  
The melting voice through mazes running,  
Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony—  
That Orpheus' self may heave his head  
From golden slumber on a bed  
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear  
Such strains as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto, to have quite set free  
His half-regained Eurydice.

These delights if thou canst give,  
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

JOHN MILTON

*Il Penseroso*

HENCE, vain deluding joys,  
The brood of folly without father bred!  
How little you bestead,  
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys!  
Dwell in some idle brain,  
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
As thick and numberless  
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams;  
Or likest hovering dreams,  
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.  
But hail, thou goddess, sage and holy!  
Hail, divinest Melancholy!  
Whose saintly visage is too bright  
To hit the sense of human sight,  
And therefore to our weaker view  
O'erlaid with black, staid wisdom's hue—  
Black, but such as in esteem  
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,  
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove  
To set her beauty's praise above  
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended.  
Yet thou art higher far descended;  
Thee bright-haired Vesta, long of yore  
To solitary Saturn bore;  
His daughter she; (in Saturn's reign  
Such mixture was not held a stain).  
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades  
He met her, and in secret shades  
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,  
While yet there was no fear of Jove.

## JOHN MILTON

Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast and demure,  
All in a robe of darkest grain  
Flowing with majestic train,  
And sable stole of cypress lawn  
Over thy decent shoulders drawn!  
Come! but keep thy wonted state,  
With even step and musing gait,  
And looks commercing with the skies,  
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:  
There, held in holy passion still,  
Forget thyself to marble, till  
With a sad, leaden, downward cast  
Thou fix them on the earth as fast;  
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet;  
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
And hears the Muses in a ring  
Aye round about Jove's altar sing:  
And add to these retired Leisure,  
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;  
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring  
Him that yon soars on golden wing,  
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne—  
The cherub Contemplation;  
And the mute Silence hist along,  
'Less Philomel will deign a song  
In her sweetest, saddest plight,  
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,  
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke  
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.  
Sweet bird! that shunn'st the noise of folly.  
Most musical, most melancholy!  
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among  
I woo, to hear thy even-song;  
And, missing thee, I walk unseen

## JOHN MILTON

On the dry, smooth-shaven green,  
To behold the wandering moon  
Riding near her highest noon,  
Like one that had been led astray  
Through the heaven's wide pathless way;  
And oft, as if her head she bowed,  
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.  
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,  
I hear the far-off curfew sound  
Over some wide-watered shore,  
Swinging slow with sullen roar;  
Or if the air will not permit,  
Some still removed place will fit,  
Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom—  
Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the cricket on the hearth,  
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,  
To bless the doors from nightly harm.  
Or let my lamp at midnight hour  
Be seen in some high lonely tower,  
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear  
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere  
The spirit of Plato, to unfold  
What worlds or what vast regions hold  
The immortal mind that hath forsook  
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;  
And of those demons that are found  
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,  
Whose power hath a true consent  
With planet or with element.  
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy  
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,  
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,  
Or the tale of Troy divine,



## JOHN MILTON

Or what (though rare) of later age  
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.

But, O sad virgin, that thy power  
Might raise Musæus from his bower!  
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing  
Such notes as, warbled to the string,  
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,  
And made Hell grant what Love did seek!  
Or call up him that left half told  
The story of Cambuscan bold—  
Of Camball and of Algarsife—  
And who had Canace to wife,  
That owned the virtuous ring and glass—  
And of the wondrous horse of brass,  
On which the Tartar king did ride!  
And if aught else great bards beside  
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
Of tourneys and of trophies hung,  
Of forests, and enchantments drear,  
Where more is meant than meets the ear.

Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,  
Till civil-suited Morn appear;  
Not tricked and flounced, as she was wont  
With the Attic boy to hunt,  
But kerchiefed in a comely cloud  
While rocking winds are piping loud,  
Or ushered with a shower still  
When the gust hath blown his fill.  
Ending on the rustling leaves,  
With minute drops from off the eaves.  
And when the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring

## JOHN MILTON

To archèd walks of twilight groves,  
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,  
Of pine or monumental oak,  
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke  
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt  
There in close covert by some brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look,  
Hide me from day's garish eye,  
While the bee with honied thigh,  
That at her flowery work doth sing,  
And the waters murmuring  
With such consort as they keep,  
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep;  
And let some strange mysterious dream  
Wave at his wings, in airy stream  
Of lively portraiture displayed,  
Softly on my eyelids laid;  
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe  
Above, about, or underncath,  
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,  
Or the unseen genius of the wood.

But let my due feet never fail  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowered roof,  
With antique pillars massy proof,  
And storied windows, richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light.  
There let the pealing organ blow  
To the full voiced quire below,  
In service high, and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.

JOHN MILTON

And may at last my weary age  
Find out the peaceful hermitage,  
The hairy ground and mossy cell,  
Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heaven doth shew,  
And every herb that sips the dew,  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like prophetic strain.

These pleasures, Melancholy, give,  
And I with thee will choose to live.

*Lycidas*

A LAMENT FOR A FRIEND DROWNED IN HIS PASSAGE FROM  
CHESTER ON THE IRISH SEA, 1637

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,  
Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.  
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear  
Compels me to disturb your season due;  
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.  
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew  
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.  
He must not float upon his watery bier  
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the Sacred Well,  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.  
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse;  
So may some gentle Muse

## JOHN MILTON

With lucky words favor my destined urn,  
And as he passes turn,  
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud;  
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,  
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.  
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared  
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,  
We drove a-field, and both together heard  
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright  
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering  
wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,  
Tempered to the oaten flute;  
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel  
From the glad sound would not be absent long,  
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.

But oh, the heavy change, now thou art gone—  
Now thou art gone, and never must return!  
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves,  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,  
And all their echoes, mourn;  
The willows, and the hazel copses green,  
Shall now no more be seen,  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.  
As killing as the canker to the rose,  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear,  
When first the white-thorn blows;  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherds' ear.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep  
Closed over the head of your loved Lycidas?

## JOHN MILTON

For neither were ye playing on the steep  
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,  
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream—  
Ay me! I fondly dream  
“Had ye been there”; for what could that have done?  
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,  
The Muse herself for her enchanting son,  
Whom universal Nature did lament,  
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,  
His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care  
To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade,  
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?  
Were it not better done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?  
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of noble mind)  
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,  
And slits the thin-spun life. “But not the praise,”  
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears;  
“Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistening foil  
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies;  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,  
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;  
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed.”

## JOHN MILTON

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honored flood,  
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,  
That strain I heard was of a higher mood;  
But now my oar proceeds,  
And listens to the herald of the sea  
That came in Neptune's plea;  
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?  
And questioned every gust of rugged winds  
That blows from off each beakèd promontory;  
They knew not of his story;  
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,  
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;  
The air was calm, and on the level brine  
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.  
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,  
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,  
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.<sup>1</sup>

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,  
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,  
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge,  
Like to that sanguine flower, inscribed with woe.  
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"  
Last came, and last did go,  
The pilot of the Galilean Lake;  
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain  
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain)  
He shook his mitered locks, and stern bespake:  
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake  
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!

<sup>1</sup> In this last couplet we have the phrase "Built in the eclipse," which is supremely suggestive and imaginative—referring perhaps to the inrush of demons from the deep in the opportune moment of eclipse. What a vastitude of idea is compressed into a little space!—E. M.

## JOHN MILTON

Of other care they little reckoning make  
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,  
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;  
Blind mouths: that scarce themselves know how to hold  
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least  
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!  
What recks it them? what need they? they are sped;  
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw:  
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;  
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace, and nothing said;  
But that two-handed engine at the door,  
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,  
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,  
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast  
Their bells, and flowerets of a thousand hues.  
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use  
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparsely looks,  
Throw hither all your quaint enameled eyes,  
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,  
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.  
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,  
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,  
The white pink and the pansy freaked with jet,  
The glowing violet,  
The musk-rose and the well-attired woodbine,  
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:  
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,

## JOHN MILTON

And daffodillies fill their cups with tears  
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.  
For so to interpose a little ease,  
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.  
Ay me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas  
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled,  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide  
Visitest the bottom of the monstrous world;  
Or whether thou to our moist vows denied,  
Sleepest by the fable of Bellerus old,  
Where the great vision of the guarded mount  
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;  
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth;  
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,  
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor:  
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky;  
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,  
Where, other groves and other streams along,  
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,  
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,  
In the blest kingdoms meek of Joy and Love.  
There entertain him all the saints above,  
In solemn troops and sweet societies,  
That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.  
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;  
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,



## JOHN MILTON

In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
While the still morn went out with sandals gray:  
He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;  
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,  
And now was dropt into the western bay:  
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:  
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

### *Night Mysteries*

FROM "COMUS"

THE star that bids the shepherd fold,  
Now the top of heaven doth hold;  
And the gilded car of day  
His glowing axle doth allay  
In the steep Atlantic stream;  
And the slope sun his upward beam  
Shoots against the dusky pole,  
Pacing toward the other goal  
Of his chamber in the east.  
Meanwhile welcome, Joy and Feast,  
Midnight Shout and Revelry,  
Topsy Dance and Jollity.  
Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
Dropping odors, dropping wine.  
Rigor now is gone to bed,  
And Advice with scrupulous head,  
Strict Age and sour Severity,  
With their grave saws in slumber lie.

## JOHN MILTON

We that are of purer fire  
Imitate the starry quire,  
Who in their nightly watchful spheres  
Lead in swift round the months and years.  
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,  
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;  
And on the tawny sands and shelves  
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.  
By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,  
The wood-nymphs decked with daisies trim,  
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:  
What hath night to do with sleep?  
Night hath better sweets to prove,  
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.  
Come, let us our rites begin:  
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,  
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.  
Hail Goddess of nocturnal sport,  
Dark-veiled Cotytto, t'whom the secret flame  
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,  
That ne'er art called, but when the dragon womb  
Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,  
And makes one blot of all the air;  
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,  
Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat, and befriend  
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end  
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,  
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,  
The nice morn, on the Indian steep  
From her cabined loophole peep,  
And to the tell-tale sun descry  
Our concealed solemnity.  
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground  
In a light fantastic round.

\* \* \* \*

JOHN MILTON

Mortals, that would follow me,  
Love Virtue, she along is free:  
She can teach ye how to climb  
Higher than the sphery chime:  
Or, if Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

*The Haunt of the Sorcerer*

FROM "COMUS"

WITHIN the navel of this hideous wood,  
Immured in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,  
Of Bacchus and of Circé born, great Comus,  
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries;  
And here to every thirsty wanderer  
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,  
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison  
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,  
And the inglorious likeness of a beast  
Fixes instead, unmolding reason's mintage  
Charactered in the face. This I have learnt  
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts,  
That brow this bottom-glade, whence night by night,  
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl,  
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,  
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate  
In their obscuréd haunts of inmost bowers.  
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,  
T' inveigle and invite the unwary sense  
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.  
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks  
Had ta'en their supper on the savory herb  
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,

## JOHN MILTON

I sat me down to watch upon a bank  
With ivy canopied, and interwove  
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,  
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,  
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,  
Till fancy had her fill; but ere a close  
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods  
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;  
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,  
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence  
Gave respite to the drowsy flighted steeds,  
That draw the litter of close-curtained sleep.  
At last a soft and solemn breathing sound  
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,  
And stole upon the air; that even Silence  
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might  
Deny her nature, and be never more,  
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,  
And took in strains that might create a soul  
Under the ribs of death: but, oh, ere long  
Too well I did perceive it was the voice  
Of my most honored Lady, your dear sister.  
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear,  
And "O poor hapless nightingale," thought I,  
"How sweet thou singest, how near the deadly snare!"

### *Philosophy*

HOW charming is divine Philosophy!  
Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools  
suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

JOHN MILTON

*From "Christmas Hymn"*

FROM THE "ODE ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY"

*Majestically great as Milton is, still he occasionally falls into rhetorical blunders, as in this ode, where, in an opening stanza, he says:*

*"Nature, in awe to Him,  
Had doffed her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize."*

*This of course is not true to the fact, nor true to the imagination. We feel it to be a forced concept, a thing that gives the stanza a sense of unreality. It seems to me that in this place and elsewhere, Milton fails to step carefully. Yet how great is some of his high-erected verse!*

**I**T was the winter wild  
While the heaven-born Child  
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies:  
Nature, in awe to Him,  
Had doffed her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize:  
It was no season then for her  
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

No war, or battle's sound,  
Was heard the world around:  
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;  
The hookèd chariot stood  
Unstained with hostile blood;  
The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng;  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by.

## JOHN MILTON

But peaceful was the night,  
Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began:  
The winds, with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kissed,  
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

The shepherds on the lawn,  
Or ere the point of dawn,  
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row:  
Full little thought they then  
That the mighty Pan  
Was kindly come to live with them below:  
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,  
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

At last surrounds their sight  
A globe of circular light,  
That with long beams the shamefaced night arrayed:  
The helmèd Cherubim,  
And sworded Seraphim,  
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,  
Harping in loud and solemn quire  
With unexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born heir.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!  
Once bless our human ears,  
If ye have power to touch our senses so;  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time,  
And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow;  
And with your ninefold harmony  
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

## JOHN MILTON

*In other parts of this remarkable Hymn, Milton makes, what seems to me, a needless drive against the old Pagan gods—Apollo and the rest—against the young divinities as conceived long ago by the inspired poets of Greece, the poets of her dim divine antiquity. We should doubtless look upon these young gods as revelations of the supernal beauty, as that beauty passed in flashes over the mind of that ancient people. So I have, in the following sonnet, ventured to utter a mild protest:*

### THE LORD OF ALL

*Milton, you did them wrong the hour you sang  
The Lord's Nativity: the fair young gods,  
Scorched by your scorn and stricken by your rods,  
Were loved of Him who took the mortal pang.  
He knew their cliffs that shone, their wells that sprang,  
And all the wonder of their purple clime;  
And as his feet descended into Time,  
Their voices on the hills and sea-reefs rang.*

*So the young gods of Hellas knew the hour  
When life's bough was to break in sudden flower;  
And in the hush they knelt without a word  
Beside the Stall; for in the little one  
They saw Apollo come again, and heard  
His name cried in the porches of the sun!*

## JOHN MILTON

### *From "Paradise Lost"*

*The poem opens with a reference to the old Hebraic explanation of the origin of evil, the presence of sin in the world, which is found in Gen. ii. 17: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "In Adam's fall, we sinned all," is the phrase in the old New England Primer. I am adding a few simple footnotes to help my young readers.*

#### THE OPENING ARGUMENT

##### Book I

OF man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
Restore us,<sup>1</sup> and regain the blissful seat,  
Sing, heavenly Muse,<sup>2</sup> that, on the secret top  
Of Oreb or of Sinai,<sup>3</sup> didst inspire  
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed<sup>4</sup>  
In the beginning how the heavens and earth  
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion<sup>5</sup> hill

<sup>1</sup> See Rom v. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> In his opening of the Iliad and the Odyssey, Homer, the father of epic poetry, invokes the aid of the goddess of poetry. Epic singers since his time have followed his appeal for inspiration. But Milton was a Puritan, and he could not, from the religious nature of his song, call upon a Pagan divinity. He therefore begs the aid of the divine inspiration which moved Moses and other prophets.

<sup>3</sup> Horeb and Sinai are two peaks of the same mountain, upon which Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. . . . And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush."

<sup>4</sup> That is, the Israelites.

<sup>5</sup> Sion, or Zion, was one of the hills upon which Jerusalem was built. Here David lived, and composed poems under the inspiration, Milton supposes, of his heavenly Muse.



## JOHN MILTON

Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook<sup>1</sup> that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above the Aonian mount,<sup>2</sup> while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me,<sup>3</sup> for thou knowest; thou from the first  
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread  
Dove-like satest brooding on the vast abyss<sup>4</sup>  
And madest it pregnant. What in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;  
That, to the hight<sup>5</sup> of this great argument,  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,  
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause  
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,  
Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off  
From their Creator, and transgress his will  
For one restraint, lords of the world besides.  
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

<sup>1</sup> Between Sion and Mount Moriah, and almost beneath the temple, "fast by the oracle of God," flowed, and still flows, "Siloa's brook." Its fountain is the pool Siloam, which ebbs and rises. Isaiah identifies it with himself: "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly" (Isa. viii. 6) and Milton here means a poetic reference to him.

<sup>2</sup> Mount Helicon, haunt of the Muses, was in Bœotia, a part of which was sometimes called Aonia.

<sup>3</sup> The poet's appeal for inspiration recalls the testimony of his widow many years after his death. "Being asked whether he did not often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation upon him for stealing from those authors, and answered with eagerness, that he stole from nobody but the Muse who inspired him; and, being asked by a lady present who the Muse was, replied it was God's Grace, and the Holy Spirit that visited him nightly."

<sup>4</sup> See Gen. i. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Milton's spelling of "height."

## JOHN MILTON

The infernal serpent,<sup>1</sup> he it was whose guile,  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
The mother of mankind, what time his pride  
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host  
Of rebel angels, by whose aid, aspiring  
To set himself in glory above his peers,  
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,  
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim  
Against the throne and monarchy of God,  
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,  
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night '  
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,  
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom  
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,  
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,  
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.  
At once, as far as angel's ken, he views  
The dismal situation waste and wild.  
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe,

<sup>1</sup> See Gen. iii; Rev. xii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> In these nine days was the creation of the world, according to Milton's cosmogony. They succeeded the nine days in which Satan fell (*Paradise Lost*, Book VI.871).

## JOHN MILTON

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,<sup>1</sup>  
That comes to all; but torture without end  
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.

### SATAN RALLIES THE FALLEN ANGELS

#### Book I

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend  
Was moving towards the shore; his ponderous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
Behind him cast. The broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist<sup>2</sup> views  
At evening from the top of Fesole,<sup>3</sup>  
Or in Valdarno,<sup>4</sup> to descry new lands,  
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.  
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine  
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast  
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand—  
He walked with, to support uneasy steps  
Over the burning marl, not like those steps  
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime  
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.  
Nathless<sup>5</sup> he so endured, till on the beach  
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called  
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced  
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks

<sup>1</sup> "All hope abandon, ye who enter here," was the inscription over the gate of Dante's hell.

<sup>2</sup> In his continental journey in 1638-39, Milton visited Galileo, the Tuscan artist or astronomer, who had improved the telescope, and discovered the unevenness of the moon's surface, Jupiter's satellites, the composition of the Milky Way, and other facts.

<sup>3</sup> A hill near Florence, Italy.

<sup>4</sup> The vale or valley of the Arno in Italy.

<sup>5</sup> A contraction in early English of "no-the-less," not the less.

## JOHN MILTON

In Vallombrosa.<sup>1</sup> . . .  
He called so loud that all the hollow deep  
Of Hell resounded: "Princes, Potentates,  
Warriors, the flower of Heaven, once yours, now lost,  
If such astonishment as this can seize  
Eternal spirits! Or have ye chosen this place  
After the toils of battle to repose  
Your wearied virtue,<sup>2</sup> for the ease you find  
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?  
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn  
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds  
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood  
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon  
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern  
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down  
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts  
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?  
Awake, arise, or be forever fallen!"

### MUSTERING THE HOSTS OF HELL

#### Book I

All these and more came flocking, but with looks  
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared  
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their chief  
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost  
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast  
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride  
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore  
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised  
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears;

<sup>1</sup> A shady valley some eighteen miles from Florence, which Milton doubtless visited. Late travelers say that autumnal leaves from the chestnut forests cover and conceal the waters of the brooks.

<sup>2</sup> Valor, like the Latin *virtus*.

## JOHN MILTON

Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound  
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared  
His mighty standard. That proud honor claimed  
Azazel<sup>1</sup> as his right, a cherub tall;  
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled  
The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,  
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,  
With gems and golden luster rich emblazed,  
Seraphic arms<sup>2</sup> and trophies; all the while  
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.  
At which the universal host upsent  
A shout that tore Hell's concave and beyond  
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.  
All in a moment through the gloom were seen  
Ten-thousand banners rise into the air,  
With orient colors waving: with them rose  
A forest huge of spears, and thronging helms  
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array  
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move  
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood<sup>3</sup>  
Of flutes and soft recorders,<sup>4</sup> such as raised  
To hight of noblest temper heroes old  
Arming to battle, and instead of rage  
Deliberate valor breathed, firm and unmoved  
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;  
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage  
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase  
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain  
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they

<sup>1</sup> This word is interpreted variously; as, "brave in retreat," "powerful against God," and "scapegoat."

<sup>2</sup> Heraldic devices borne on a shield.

<sup>3</sup> "Dorian mood," the severe, grave style of the music of the Greeks. The Spartans went to battle "slowly, to the music of many flute players."

<sup>4</sup> Flageolets.

## JOHN MILTON

Breathing united force<sup>1</sup> with fixed thought,  
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed  
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now  
Advanced in view they stand, a horrid<sup>2</sup> front  
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise  
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,  
Awaiting what command their mighty chief  
Had to impose. He through the armèd files  
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse  
The whole battalion views—their order due,  
Their visages and stature as of gods;  
Their number last he sums. And now his heart  
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,  
Glories; for never, since created man,  
Met such embodied force as, named with these,  
Could merit more than that small infantry  
Warred on by cranes. . . .

He, above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
Stood like a tower. His form<sup>3</sup> had not yet lost  
All her original brightness, nor appeared  
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new risen  
Looks through the horizontal misty air  
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,  
In dim eclipse, disastrous<sup>4</sup> twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone  
Above them all the archangel; but his face

<sup>1</sup> "Breathing united force," an Homeric phrase, suggesting that the host showed their valor and strength, and fixedness of purpose, by their manner of breathing.

<sup>2</sup> Bristling; Latin, *horridus*.

<sup>3</sup> "Form" is treated as if it were a feminine noun, like the Latin *forma*.

<sup>4</sup> It was the old faith that eclipses foretold calamities. The word is from *dis* ("evil") and *astrum* ("star") ill-starred.

## JOHN MILTON

Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows  
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride  
Waiting revenge.

### THE CHALLENGE OF DEATH Book II

The other shape—

If shape it might be called that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed  
For each seemed either—black it stood as night,  
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head  
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.  
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat  
The monster moving onward came as fast  
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.  
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired—  
Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,  
Created thing naught valued he, nor shunned)  
And with disdainful look thus first began:

“Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,  
That darest though grim and terrible, advance  
Thy miscreated front athwart my way  
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,  
That be assured, without leave asked of thee.  
Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,  
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of Heaven.”

To whom the goblin, full of wrath, replied:  
“Art thou that traitor angel, art thou he,  
Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then  
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms  
Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,

## JOHN MILTON

Conjured<sup>1</sup> against the Highest; for which both thou  
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned  
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?  
And reckonest thou thyself with spirits of Heaven,  
Hell-doomed, and breathest defiance here and scorn  
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,  
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,  
False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,  
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue  
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart  
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

So spake the grisly terror, and in shape,  
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold  
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,  
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood  
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,  
That fires the length of Ophiuchus<sup>2</sup> huge  
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair<sup>3</sup>  
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head  
Leveled his deadly aim. Their fatal hands  
No second stroke intend; and such a frown  
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,  
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on  
Over the Caspian; then stand front to front,  
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow  
To join their dark encounter in mid air.  
So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell  
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;  
For never but once more was either like

<sup>1</sup> Conspiring; sworn together in conspiracy.

<sup>2</sup> The northern constellation Serpentarius, or the Serpent, which is about forty degrees long. The name (from two Greek words meaning "serpent" and "to hold") may refer to the fable of the infant Hercules squeezing to death two serpents.

<sup>3</sup> In reference to the tail. "Comet" is derived from the Greek Koupn ("flowing hair"). Comets were supposed to foretell disasters.



## JOHN MILTON

To meet so great a foe.<sup>1</sup> And now great deeds  
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,  
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat  
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,  
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

### MAN AND WOMAN MADE ONE UNITY

#### Book IV

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
Godlike erect, with native honor clad,  
In naked majesty seemed lords of all,  
And worthy seemed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;  
For contemplation he and valor formed;  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace:  
He for God only, she for God in him.

### NOW CAME STILL EVENING ON

#### Book IV

Now came still evening on, and twilight grey  
Had in her sober livery all things clad;  
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,  
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests  
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;  
She all night long her amorous descant sung.  
Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament  
With living sapphires: Hesperus that led  
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon  
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,  
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,  
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

<sup>1</sup> Christ. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. xc.26). "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

## JOHN MILTON

### THE BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE OF THE ANGELS

#### Book VI

Now went forth the morn,  
Such as in highest Heaven, arrayed in gold  
Empyrean; from before her vanished night,  
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain  
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,  
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,  
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.

\* \* \* \* \*

Far in the horizon to the north appeared  
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched  
In battailous aspect, and nearer view  
Bristled with upright beams innumerable  
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields  
Various, with boastful argument portrayed,  
The banded powers of Satan hasting on  
With furious expedition; for they weened  
That selfsame day, by fight, or by surprise,  
To win the mount of God, and on his throne  
To set the envier of his state, the proud  
Aspirer; but their thoughts proved fond and vain  
In the midway; though strange to us it seemed  
At first, that angel should with angel war,  
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet  
So oft in festivals of joy and love  
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,  
Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout  
Of battle now began, and rushing sound  
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.  
High in the midst, exalted as a god,  
The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,  
Idol of majesty divine, inclosed

## JOHN MILTON

With flaming cherubim, and golden shields;  
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now  
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,  
A dreadful interval, and front to front  
Presented, stood in terrible array  
Of hideous length: before the cloudy van,  
On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,  
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,  
Came towering, armed in adamant and gold.

### BATTLE BETWEEN THE ANGELS AND THE ANARCHS

#### Book VI

Michaël bid sound

The archangel trumpet; through the vast of Heaven  
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung  
Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze  
The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined  
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,  
And clamor, such as heard in Heaven till now  
Was never; arms on armor clashing brayed  
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise  
Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss  
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,  
And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.  
So under fiery cope together rushed  
Both battles main, with ruinous assault  
And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven  
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth  
Had to her center shook. \* \* \*

Deeds of eternal fame

Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread  
That war, and various: sometimes on firm ground

## JOHN MILTON

A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing,  
Tormented all the air; all air seemed then  
Conflicting fire. \* \* \*

Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power  
 Which God hath in his mighty angels placed!)  
 Their arms away they threw, and to the hills  
 (For earth hath this variety from Heaven,  
 Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)  
 Light as the lightning-glimpse they ran, they flew:  
 From their foundations loosening to and fro,  
 They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,  
 Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops  
 Uplifting bore them in their hands: amaze,  
 Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,  
 When coming toward them so dread they saw  
 The bottom of the mountains upward turned, \* \* \*  
 and on their heads

Main promontories flung, which in the air  
Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.  
Their armor helped their harm, crushed in and bruised  
Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain  
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan;  
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind  
Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light,  
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.  
The rest, in imitation, to like arms  
Betook them, and the neighboring hills uptore:  
So hills amid the air encountered hills,  
Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire,  
That underground they fought in dismal shade;  
Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game  
To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped  
Upon confusion rose.

## JOHN MILTON

### THE VICTOR

#### Book VI

So spake the Son, and into terror changed  
His countenance too severe to be beheld,  
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.  
At once the four spread out their starry wings  
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs  
Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound  
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.  
He on his impious foes right onward drove,  
Gloomy as night: under his burning wheels  
The steadfast empyréan shook throughout,  
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon  
Among them he arrived; in his right hand  
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent  
Before him, such as in their souls infixed  
Plagues: they, astonished, all resistance lost,  
All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;  
O'er shields and helms and helmèd heads he rode  
Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate,  
That wished the mountains now might be again  
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.  
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell  
His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged four  
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels  
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes.  
One spirit in them ruled; and every eye  
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire  
Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,  
And of their wonted vigor left them drained,  
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.  
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked  
His thunder in mid volley; for he meant  
Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven.

JOHN MILTON

The overthrown he raised, and as a herd  
Of goats or timorous flock together thronged,  
Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued  
With terrors and with furies, to the bounds  
And crystal wall of heaven; which, opening wide,  
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed  
Into the wasteful deep. The monstrous sight  
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse  
Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw  
Down from the verge of heaven; eternal wrath  
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

*On May Morning*

NOW the bright morning-star, day's harbinger,  
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her  
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws  
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.  
Hail, bounteous May! that dost inspire  
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;  
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,  
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.  
Thus we salute thee with our early song,  
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

ENGLAND, 1609-1642

*Why so Pale and Wan?*

WHY so pale and wan, fond lover?  
Prithee, why so pale?  
Will, when looking well can't move her,  
Looking ill prevail?  
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?  
Prithee, why so mute?  
Will, when speaking well can't win her,  
Saying nothing do 't?  
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move,  
This cannot take her.  
If of herself she will not love,  
Nothing can make her:  
The devil take her!

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1609

*Love Me Not for Comely Grace*

LOVE me not for comely grace,  
For my pleasing eye or face,  
Nor for any outward part,  
No, nor for a constant heart;  
For these may fail or turn to ill,  
So thou and I shall sever:  
Keep, therefore, a true woman's eye,  
And love me still but know not why—  
So hast thou the same reason still  
To doat upon me ever!

WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT

ENGLAND, 1611-1643

*To Chloe:*

*Who for his sake wished herself younger*

THERE are two births—the one when light  
First strikes the new awakened sense;  
The other when two souls unite,  
And we must count our life from thence.  
When you loved me and I loved you  
Then both of us were born anew.



## WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT

Love then to us new souls did give  
And in those souls did plant new powers;  
Since when another life we live,  
The breath we breathe is his, not ours.  
Love makes those young whom age doth chill,  
And whom he finds young keeps young still.

## SAMUEL BUTLER

ENGLAND, 1612-1680

BUTLER was fifty years old when he published the first part of the immense lampoon, *Hudibras*, which has given him his place in English letters. In *Hudibras* is waged a war against hypocrisy in general and Puritanism in particular. The poet also aims his shafts of satire against false show of courage, pedantry of learning, the fatuous conventions of love poetry, the worldliness of love, pretensions of pseudo science, delusive aids of law. The terse and stinging sentences of the mock epic were once the current coin of language; but their author lived and died a neglected and morose man, leaving a volume of posthumous papers full of bitter flings against mankind.

"The verse of Butler is scorn made metrical." The volubility, the amazing invention in phrase and illustration, the peculiar "pirouetting" rhythm, the abundant wit, picturesqueness, and point of *Hudibras* make it indeed one of the rare satires of our language.

SAMUEL BUTLER

*Description of Hudibras and His Equipments*

FROM "HUDIBRAS"

WHEN civil dudgeon first grew high,  
And men fell out they knew not why;  
When hard words, jealousies and fears,  
Set folks together by the ears,  
And made them fight, like mad or drunk,  
For dame Religion, as for punk;<sup>1</sup>  
(Whose honesty they all durst swear for,  
Though not a man of them knew wherefore)  
When gospel-trumpeter, surrounded  
With long-eared rout, to battle sounded;  
And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,  
Was beat with fist instead of a stick;  
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,  
And out he rode a colonelling.  
A wight he was, whose very sight would  
Entitle him Mirror of Knighthood,  
That never bowed his stubborn knee  
To anything but chivalry,  
Nor put up blow, but that which laid  
Right Worshipful on shoulder-blade;  
Chief of domestic knights and errant,  
Either for chartel<sup>2</sup> or for warrant;  
Great on the bench, great in the saddle,  
That could as well bind o'er as swaddle;<sup>3</sup>  
Mighty he was at both of these,  
And styled of war, as well as peace.  
(So some rats, of amphibious nature,  
Are either for the land or water).

<sup>1</sup> An old word for prostitute.

<sup>2</sup> A challenge to a duel.

<sup>3</sup> To beat or cudgel.

## SAMUEL BUTLER

But here our authors make a doubt,  
Whether he were more wise or stout:  
Some hold the one, and some the other,  
But, howso'er they make a pother,  
The difference was so small, his brain  
Outweighed his rage but half a grain;  
Which made some take him for a tool,  
That knaves do work with, called a fool.  
For 't has been held by many, that  
As Montaigne, playing with his cat,  
Complains she thought him but an ass,  
Much more she would Sir Hudibras  
(For that's the name our valiant knight  
To all his challenges did write)  
But they're mistaken very much;  
'Tis plain enough he was no such.  
We grant, although he had much wit,  
He was very shy of using it,  
As being loth to wear it out,  
And therefore bore it not about,  
Unless on holy-days, or so,  
As men their best apparel do.  
Besides, 'tis known he could speak Greek  
As naturally as pigs squeak;  
That Latin was no more difficile,  
Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle:  
Being rich in both, he never scanted  
His bounty unto such as wanted;  
But much of either would afford  
To many that had not one word.

\* \* \* \* \*

He was in logic a great critic,  
Profoundly skilled in analytic;  
He could distinguish and divide

## SAMUEL BUTLER

A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;  
On either which he would dispute,  
Confute, change hands, and still confute.  
He'd undertake to prove, by force  
Of argument, a man's no horse;  
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,  
And that a lord may be an owl,  
A calf an alderman, a goose a justice,  
And rooks committee-men and trustees.  
He'd run in debt by disputation,  
And pay with ratiocination.  
All this by syllogism, true  
In mood and figure, he would do.  
For rhetoric, he could not ope  
His mouth, but out there flew a trope;  
And when he happened to break off  
In the middle of his speech, or cough,  
He had hard words ready to show why,  
And tell what rules he did it by;  
Else, when with greatest art he spoke,  
You'd think he talked like other folk;  
For all a rhetorician's rules  
Teach nothing but to name his tools.  
But, when he pleased to show 't, his speech,  
In loftiness of sound, was rich;  
A Babylonish dialect,  
Which learned pedants much affect;  
It was a particolored dress  
Of patched and pieballed languages;  
'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,  
Like fustian heretofore on satin;  
It had an old promiscuous tone,  
As if he had talked three parts in one;  
Which made some think, when he did gabble,  
They had heard three laborers of Babel,

SAMUEL BUTLER

Or Cerberus himself pronounce  
A leash of languages at once.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

In mathematics he was greater  
Than Tycho Brahe or Erra Pater;<sup>2</sup>  
For he, by geometric scale,  
Could take the size of pots of ale;  
Resolve, by sines and tangents, strait,  
If bread or butter wanted weight;  
And wisely tell, what hour o' the day  
The clock does strike, by algebra.

\* \* \* \* \*

For his religion, it was fit  
To match his learning and his wit:  
'T was Presbyterian true blue;  
For he was of that stubborn crew  
Of errant saints, whom all men grant  
To be the true church militant;  
Such as do build their faith upon  
The holy text of pike and gun;  
Decide all controversies by  
Infallible artillery;  
And prove their doctrine orthodox,  
By apostolic blows and knocks;  
Call fire, and sword, and desolation,  
A godly, thorough reformation,  
Which always must be carried on,  
And still be doing, never done;  
As if religion were intended  
For nothing else but to be mended:  
A sect whose chief devotion lies

<sup>1</sup> A happy use of the word leash, which means at once three in number, and a band for a dog.

<sup>2</sup> The name of an obscure old astrologer, applied in the time of Butler to an imposter named Lilly.

## SAMUEL BUTLER

In odd perverse antipathies;  
In falling out with that or this,  
And finding somewhat still amiss;  
More peevish, cross and splenetic,  
Than dog distract, or monkey sick;  
That with more care keep holy-day  
The wrong, than others the right way;  
Compound for sins they are inclined to,  
By damning those they have no mind to:  
Still so perverse and opposite,  
As if they worshipped God for spite:  
The self-same thing they will abhor  
One way, and long another for:  
Free-will they one way disavow,  
Another, nothing else allow;  
All piety consists therein  
In them, in other men all sin:  
Rather than fail, they will defy  
That which they love most tenderly;  
Quarrel with minced pies and disparage<sup>1</sup>  
Their best and dearest friend, plum porridge,  
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,  
And blaspheme custard through the nose.  
The apostles of this fierce religion  
Like Mahomet's, were ass and widgeon.  
To whom our knight, by fast instinct  
Of wit and temper was so linkt,  
As if hypocrisy and nonsense  
Had got the advowson of his conscience.  
Thus was he gifted and accoutred,  
We mean on the inside, not the outward:  
That next of all we shall discuss;  
Then listen, sirs; it follows thus.

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the attitude of the Puritans against good cheer, particularly at Christmas.

SAMUEL BUTLER

His tawny beard was the equal grace  
Both of his wisdom and his face.  
In cut and dye so like a tile,  
A sudden view it would beguile;  
The upper part whereof was whey,  
The nether orange, mixed with grey.  
This hairy meteor did denounce  
The fall of sceptres and of crowns;  
With grisly type did represent  
Declining age of government;  
And tell, with hieroglyphic spade,  
Its own grave and the State's were made.

*Saintship Versus Conscience*

FROM "HUDIBRAS"

WHY didst thou choose that cursèd sin,  
Hypocrisy, to set up in?"  
"Because it is the thriving'st calling,  
The only saints' bell that rings all in;  
In which all churches are concerned,  
And is the easiest to be learned."

\* \* \* \* \*

Quoth he, "I am resolved to be  
Thy scholar in this mystery;  
And therefore first desire to know  
Some principles on which you go.  
What makes a knave a child of God,  
And one of us?"—"A livelihood."  
"What renders beating out of brains,  
And murder godliness?"—"Great gains."  
"What's tender conscience?"—"T is a botch  
That will not bear the gentlest touch;

## SAMUEL BUTLER

But, breaking out, despatches more  
Than th' epidemical'st plague-sore."

"What makes y' encroach upon our trade,  
And damn all others?"—"To be paid."

"What's orthodox and true believing  
Against a conscience?"—"A good living."

"What makes rebelling against kings  
A good old cause?"—"Administrings."<sup>1</sup>

"What makes all doctrines plain and clear?"  
"About two hundred pounds a-year."

"And that which was proved true before,  
Prove false again?"—"Two hundred more."

"What makes the breaking of all oaths  
A holy duty?"—"Food and clothes."

"What, laws and freedom, persecution?"  
"Being out of power and contribution."

"What makes a church a den of thieves?"  
"A dean and chapter, and white sleeves."

"And what would serve, if these were gone,  
To make it orthodox?"—"Our own."

"What makes morality a crime,  
The most notorious of the time;

Morality, which both the saints  
And wicked too cry out against?"

"'Cause grace and virtue are within  
Prohibited degrees of kin;

And therefore no true saint allows  
They shall be suffered to espouse."

<sup>1</sup> Administrings were powers given by the law to appropriate the goods of persons dying intestate.



## RICHARD CRASHAW

ENGLAND, 1613?-1649

THIS religious poet was born in London, the son of a Puritan pastor. He joined the Church of Rome, and his poems constitute the only important contribution to English literature made by a pronounced Catholic, embodying Catholic doctrine, during the whole of the seventeenth century. It is well known that Crashaw is very uneven, but that he rises at his best to a fervor which is electrical, and which anticipates the poetry of Francis Thompson in our own time. Crashaw's masterpiece (if we except *The Litany* and *The Rapture*) comes at the end of the otherwise tedious production, *The Flaming Heart*, when, in the twinkling of an eye, without warning of any sort, an astonishing inspiration rushes up into the heaven of poetry. *The Weeper* contains many examples of "metaphysical" absurdity; but in verse after verse Crashaw has an unearthly delicacy and witchery which only Blake has equalled. At other times, he seems to invent, in the most casual and unthinking fashion, new metrical effects and new jewelries of diction, which the greatest lyric poets—Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson, Swinburne—have woven into their own harmonies. It is his inequality that has caused his poetry to fail of popular acclaim.

Of the five principal religious poets of his time—Crashaw, Sandys, Herbert, Quarles, and Vaughan—Crashaw certainly was the greatest genius: hence I select him as the representative of the group.

RICHARD CRASHAW

*From "Wishes to His Supposed Mistress"*

WHOEVER she be,  
That not impossible She  
That shall command my heart and me—

Wherever she lie,  
Locked up from mortal eye  
In shady leaves of destiny—

Till that ripe birth  
Of studied Fate stand forth,  
And teach her fair steps to our earth—

Till that divine  
Idea take a shrine  
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine,

Meet you her, my Wishes,  
Bespeak her to my blisses,  
And be ye called my absent kisses.

I wish her Beauty  
That owes not all its duty  
To gaudy tire, or glistening shoe-tie—

A Face that's best  
By its own beauty drest,  
And can alone commend the rest—

A Cheek where grows  
More than a morning rose,  
Which to no box his being owes—

RICHARD CRASHAW

Eyes that displace  
The neighbor diamond, and outface  
That sunshine by their own sweet grace—

Tresses that wear  
Jewels but to declare  
How much themselves more precious are—

Smiles that can warm  
The blood, yet teach a charm,  
That chastity shall take no harm—

Days that need borrow  
No part of their good-morrow  
From a fore-spent night of sorrow—

Nights sweet as they,  
Made short by lovers' play,  
Yet long by the absence of the day—

Life that dares send  
A challenge to his end,  
And when it comes, say, "Welcome, friend!"

I wish her store  
Of worth may leave her poor  
Of wishes; and I wish—no more.

Now, if Time knows  
That Her, whose radiant brows  
Weave them a garland of my vows—

Her that dares be  
What these lines wish to see;  
I seek no further, it is She.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

*Upon the Book and Picture of the  
Seraphical Saint Teresa*

O THOU undaunted daughter of desires!  
By all thy dower of lights and fires;  
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;  
By all thy lives and deaths of love;  
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,  
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;  
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire;  
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;  
By the full kingdom of that final kiss  
That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee His;  
By all the Heaven thou hast in Him  
(Fair sister of the seraphim!)  
By all of Him we have in thee;  
Leave nothing of myself in me.  
Let me so read thy life, that I  
Unto all life of mine may die!

*On a Prayer-Book Sent to Mrs. M. R.*

*Here is a remarkable poem from Crashaw, the poet who was so powerful an influence upon that later Catholic poet, Francis Thompson. Crashaw touches here upon an esoteric teaching, which Thomas Lake Harris, the modern seer, has emphasized in his remarkable writings—that Sex is the heart of all true religion and the heart of the living universe—that sex, indeed, is the secret of the Godhead. Because of this fact, sex on earth should be lifted from the infernality of the Pit to the quickening ideality of the Heavens. For the illustrious Swedenborg—in his "Heaven and Hell"—tells us that the heart of Heaven is marriage, the perfect marriage to the one, the marriage of eternity. Crashaw, the seraphic mystic and partial seer, reveals the Christ as the Bridegroom: hence his closing rapture:*

RICHARD CRASHAW

*"Happy soul, she shall discover  
What joy, what bliss,  
How many heavens at once, it is  
To have a God become a lover!"*

L O! here a little volume, but great book,  
    (Fear it not, Sweet—  
    It is no hypocrite!)  
Much larger in itself than in its look!

It is—in one rich handful—Heaven, and all  
Heaven's royal hosts encamped—thus small  
To prove that true schools use to tell,  
A thousand angels in one point can dwell.  
It is Love's great artillery,  
Which here contracts itself and comes to lie  
Close couched in your white bosom, and from thence,  
As from a snowy fortress of defence,  
    Against the ghostly foe to take your part,  
    And fortify the hold of your chaste heart.

    It is the armory of light—  
    Let constant use but keep it bright,  
    You'll find it yields  
To holy hands and humble hearts  
    More swords and shields  
Than sin hath snares, or Hell hath darts.  
    Only be sure  
    The hands be pure  
That hold these weapons, and the eyes  
Those of turtles—chaste and true,  
    Wakeful and wise,  
Here is a friend will fight for you.

Dear soul, be strong:  
Mercy will come ere long,

## RICHARD CRASHAW

And bring her bosom full of blessings—  
Flowers of never-fading grace,  
To make immortal dressings  
For worthy souls, whose wise embraces  
Store up themselves for Him who is alone  
The Spouse of virgins, and the virgin's son.

But if the noble Bridegroom, when He come,  
Shall find the wandering heart from home,  
Leaving her chaste abode  
To gad abroad—

Amongst the gay mates of the god of flies  
To take her pleasures, and to play,  
And keep the devil's holiday—

To dance in the sunshine of some smiling,  
But beguiling

Sphere of sweet and sugared lies—  
Some slippery pair  
Of false, perhaps as fair,

Flattering but forswearing eyes—  
Doubtless some other heart

Will get the start,  
And, stepping in before,

Will take possession of the sacred store  
Of hidden sweets and holy joys—

Words which are not heard with ears,  
(These tumultuous shops of noise)

Effectual whispers, whose still voice  
The soul itself more feels than hears—

Amorous languishments, luminous trances,  
Sights which are not seen with eyes—

Spiritual and soul-piercing glances,

Whose pure and subtle lightning flies  
Home to the heart, and sets the house on fire,  
And melts it down in sweet desire;

RICHARD CRASHAW

Yet doth not stay  
To ask the windows leave to pass that way—

Delicious deaths, soft exhalations  
Of soul, dear and divine annihilations—  
    A thousand unknown rites  
    Of joys, and rarified delights—  
An hundred-thousand loves and graces,  
    And many a mystic thing  
    Which the divine embraces  
Of the dear Spouse of spirits with them will bring,  
    For which it is no shame  
That dull mortality must not know a name.  
    Of all this hidden store  
Of blessings, and ten-thousand more,  
    If, when He come,  
He find the heart from home,  
    Doubtless he will unload  
Himself some otherwhere,  
    And pour abroad  
His precious sweets  
On the fair soul whom first He meets.

O fair! O fortunate! O rich! O dear!  
    O happy and thrice happy she—  
    Dear silver-breasted dove,  
    Whoever she be—  
    Whose early love  
    With wingèd vows  
Makes haste to meet her Morning Spouse,  
And close with His immortal kisses!  
    Happy soul! who never misses  
    To improve that precious hour,  
    And every day  
    Seize her sweet prey—

RICHARD CRASHAW

All fresh and fragrant as He rises,  
Dropping, with a balmy shower,  
A delicious dew of spices!

O! let that happy soul hold fast  
Her heavenly armful; she shall taste  
At once ten-thousand paradises:  
    She shall have power  
    To rifle and deflower  
The rich and roseal spring of those rare sweets  
Which, with a swelling bosom, there she meets—  
Boundless and infinite, bottomless treasures  
    Of pure inebriating pleasures:  
Happy soul! she shall discover  
    What joy, what bliss,  
    How many heavens at once, it is  
To have a God become her lover!



SIR JOHN DENHAM

IRELAND, 1615-1669

*The Thames*

FROM "COOPER'S HILL"

*"Cooper's Hill" is the poem by which Denham is remembered. It was extravagantly praised by Samuel Johnson as the first example in English of a poem devoted to local description.*

**T**HAMES! the most loved of all the Ocean's sons  
By his old sire, to his embraces runs,  
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,  
Like mortal life to meet eternity.

Oh, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme!  
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;  
Strong without rage; without o'erflowing, full.

## RICHARD LOVELACE

ENGLAND, 1618-1658

LOVELACE is chiefly known by two brief songs, *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars* and *To Althea, from Prison*. They were inspired by a Lucy Sacheverell, to whom Lovelace was devoted. Having celebrated her accomplishments in exquisite poetry, Lovelace was taken prisoner in one of the Continental wars of the period, and was reported to be dead. Whereupon the lady hastily married another. Returning to England, the jilted poet degenerated into a vagabond, and is said to have died of a broken heart.

### *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars*

TELL me not, Sweet, I am unkind,  
That from the nunnery  
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind  
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,  
The first foe in the field;  
And with a stronger faith embrace  
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such  
As thou too shalt adore:  
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,  
Loved I not Honor more.

RICHARD LOVELACE

*To Althea, from Prison*

WHEN Love with unconfined wings  
Hovers within my gates,  
And my divine Althea brings  
To whisper at the grates—  
When I lie tangled in her hair  
And fettered to her eye,  
The birds that wanton in the air  
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round  
With no allaying Thames,  
Our careless heads with roses bound,  
Our hearts with loyal flames—  
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,  
When healths and draughts go free—  
Fishes that tinkle in the deep  
Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I  
With shriller throat shall sing  
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,  
And glories of my King;  
When I shall voice aloud how good  
He is, how great should be,  
Enlargèd winds, that curl the flood,  
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage;  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for an hermitage;

RICHARD LOVELACE

If I have freedom in my love  
And in my soul am free,  
Angels alone, that soar above,  
Enjoy such liberty.

ABRAHAM COWLEY

ENGLAND, 1618-1667

*The Swallow*

FOOLISH prater, what dost thou  
So early at my window do?  
Cruel bird, thou'st taken away  
A dream out of my arms to-day,  
A dream that never must equalled be  
By all that waking eyes may see.  
Thou this damage to repair  
Nothing half so sweet and fair,  
Nothing half so good, canst bring,  
Though men say thou bring'st the Spring.

ANONYMOUS

SCOTLAND, 1621

*Waly, Waly*

O WALY, WALY, up the bank,  
And waly, waly, doun the brae,  
And waly, waly, yon burn-side,  
Where I and my Love wont to gae!  
I leaned my back unto an aik,  
I thocht it was a trustie tree;  
But first it bowed and syne it brak—  
Sae my true Love did lichtlie me.

O waly, waly, gin love be bonnie  
A little time while it is new!  
But when 'tis auld it waxeth cauld,  
And fades awa' like morning dew.  
O wherefore should I busk my heid,  
Or wherefore should I kame my hair?  
For my true Love has me forsook,  
And says he'll never lo'e me mair.

Now Arthur's Seat sall be my bed,  
The sheet sall never be 'fild by me;  
Saint Anton's well sall be my drink;  
Since my true Love has forsaken me.  
Marti'mas wind, when wilt thou blaw,  
And shake the green leaves aff the tree?  
O gentle Death, when wilt thou come?  
For of my life I am wearie.

## ANONYMOUS

'Tis not the frost, that freezes fell,  
Nor blawing snaw's inclemencie,  
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry;  
But my Love's heart grown cauld to me.  
When we cam in by Glasgow toun,  
We were a comely sicht to see:  
My Love was clad in the black velvèt,  
And I mysel in cramasie.

But had I wist, before I kist,  
That love had been sae ill to win,  
I had lock'd my heart in a case o' gowd,  
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.  
And O! if my young babe were born,  
And set upon the nurse's knee,  
And I mysel were dead and gane,  
And the green grass growing over me!

## ANDREW MARVELL

ENGLAND, 1621-1678

MARVELL, at his best, wrote exquisite garden-poems, distinguished for their rich imagery and their loyal study of nature. At his second best, he is a gruff political satirist. His ablest satires are *Last Instructions to a Painter* and *The Character of Holland*. Of his lyrics, *The Emigrants in the Bermudas*, *Thoughts in a Garden* and the girl's lament for her dead fawn merit the praise that has long been given them. If we exclude Milton, no poet of that time touches sweeter or nobler lyrical notes; but he is singularly unequal; he flies high, but is not long on the wing.

## ANDREW MARVELL

Marvell was one of the heroic spirits of the poetic brotherhood. For a time during the Protectorate, he worked beside Milton. He was a member of the House of Commons in the reign of Charles II. He refused every offer of promotion, refused also, it is said, a direct bribe offered him by the Lord Treasurer. Dying in poverty, Marvell—like Aristides—was buried at the public expense.

### *From "To His Coy Mistress"*

*Here, in the last four lines, we have time and eternity flashed upon us in a wonderful manner. This is the manner of the great poets. It is of interest that Marvell was for some time assistant to John Milton as Latin Secretary when Milton was Foreign Secretary to the Council of State in the Cromwell Government.*

HAD we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down and think which way  
To walk and pass our long love's day.  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the Flood;  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow;  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,

ANDREW MARVELL

And the last age should show your heart.  
For, Lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.  
But at my back I always hear  
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.

*From "Thoughts in a Garden"*

F AIR Quiet, have I found thee here,  
And Innocence thy sister dear?  
Mistaken long, I sought you then  
In busy companies of men:  
Your sacred plants, if here below,  
Only among the plants will grow:  
Society is all but rude  
To this delicious solitude.

What wondrous life is this I lead!  
Ripe apples drop about my head;  
The luscious clusters of the vine  
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;  
The nectarine and curious peach  
Into my hands themselves do reach;  
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,  
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less  
Withdraws into its happiness.  
The mind, that ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find;



ANDREW MARVELL

Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other worlds, and other seas;  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,  
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,  
Casting the body's vest aside,  
My soul into the boughs does glide:  
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,  
Then whets and claps its silver wings,  
And, till prepared for longer flight,  
Waves in its plumes the various light.

How well the skilful gardener drew  
Of flowers and herbs this dial new!  
Where, from above, the milder sun  
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;  
And, as it works, the industrious bee  
Computes its time as well as we.  
How could such sweet and wholesome hours  
Be reckoned, but with herbs and flowers!

*An Epitaph*

ENOUGH; and leave the rest to Fame:  
'Tis to commend her, but to name.  
Courtship which, living, she declined,  
When dead, to offer were unkind:  
Nor can the truest wit, or friend,  
Without detracting, her commend.

## ANDREW MARVELL

To say—she lived a virgin chaste  
In this age loose and all unlaced;  
Nor was, when vice is so allowed,  
Of virtue or ashamed or proud;  
That her soul was on Heaven so bent,  
No minute but it came and went;  
That, ready her last debt to pay,  
She summed her life up every day;  
Modest as morn, as mid-day bright,  
Gentle as evening, cool as night;  
'Tis true; but all too weakly said.  
'Twas more significant, she's dead.

### *From "A Maiden Lamenting for Her Fawn"*

*Here is a fine passage from a long and otherwise tiresome poem. Enjoy its delicate imaginations; enjoy the playfulness of the fawn and the naïveté of the maiden. Poe assures us that this is "poetry of the loftiest order", and that it is "crowded with nature and with pathos." It is the inner blossom of poetry, the blossom with all the thorns and husk cut away. Rejoice in the maiden's delight in "the little silver feet"—the four feet treading "on the four winds"—one foot for each wind! Behold the fawn lying also among the lilies "like a bank of lilies", or else moving about to feed on roses. Enter into the glowing enthusiasm of the child. At last she cries ecstatically out of her love and grief, out of her tender memory:*

*"Had it lived long, it would have been  
Lilies without—roses within!"*

ANDREW MARVELL

**I**T is a wondrous thing how fleet  
'Twas on those little silver feet!  
With a pretty skipping grace  
It oft would challenge me the race!  
And when it had left me far away,  
'Twould stay, and run again, and stay;  
For it was nimbler much than hinds,  
And trod as if on the four winds.

I have a garden of my own,  
But so with roses overgrown,  
And lilies, that you would it guess  
To be a little wilderness;  
And all the spring-time of the year  
It only lovèd to be there.  
Among the beds of lilies I  
Have sought it oft where it should lie;  
Yet could not, till itself would rise,  
Find it, although before mine eyes;  
For in the flaxen lilies shade,  
It like a bank of lilies laid.  
Upon the roses it would feed  
Until its lips even seemed to bleed;  
And then to me 'twould boldly trip,  
And print those roses on my lip,  
But all its chief delight was still  
On roses thus itself to fill,  
And its pure virgin limbs to fold  
In whitest sheets of lilies cold.  
Had it lived long, it would have been  
Lilies without—roses within.

HENRY VAUGHAN

WALES, 1621-1695

*The Retreat*

*In this poem, written nearly two hundred years before Wordsworth, we get the opening idea of his great "Intimations of Immortality," beginning*

*"Heaven lies about us in our infancy."*

*Doubtless Wordsworth got his start from Vaughan; but he went on, using his own wings. I do not complain of this indebtedness: a poet is justified in taking a hint wherever he finds one, provided he goes on and creates a new beautiful thing.*

HAPPY those early days, when I  
Shined in my Angel-infancy!  
Before I understood this place  
Appointed for my second race,  
Or taught my soul to fancy aught  
But a white celestial thought:  
When yet I had not walked above  
A mile or two from my first Love,  
And looking back—at that short space—  
Could see a glimpse of His bright face:  
When on some gilded cloud, or flower,  
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,  
And in those weaker glories spy  
Some shadows of eternity:  
Before I taught my tongue to wound  
My Conscience with a sinful sound,  
Or had the black art to dispense

HENRY VAUGHAN

A several sin to every sense,  
But felt through all this fleshly dress  
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

Oh how I long to travel back,  
And tread again that ancient track!  
That I might once more reach that plain  
Where first I left my glorious train;  
From whence the enlightened spirit sees  
That shady City of Palm-trees.  
But ah! my soul with too much stay  
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!

Some men a forward motion love,  
But I by backward steps would move;  
And when this dust falls to the urn,  
In that state I came, return.

*From "Friends Departed"*

THEY are all gone into the world of light!  
And I alone sit lingering here;  
Their very memory is fair and bright,  
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the Just,  
Shining nowhere, but in the dark;  
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,  
Could man outlook that mark!

And yet as Angels in some brighter dreams  
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep:  
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,  
And into glory peep.

HENRY VAUGHAN

*From "The World"*

I SAW Eternity the other night,  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm, as it was bright;  
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,  
Driven by the spheres  
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world  
And all her train were hurled.

\* \* \* \* \*

JOHN BUNYAN

ENGLAND, 1628-1688

*Song in the Valley of Humiliation*

HE that is down, needs fear no fall,  
He that is low, no pride;  
He that is humble, ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,  
Little be it, or much;  
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is  
That go on pilgrimage:  
Here little, and hereafter bliss,  
Is best from age to age.

JOHN COLLOP  
ENGLAND, ABOUT 1630—?

Phœbus, what a name  
To fill the sounding trump of future fame!

JOHN DRINKWATER, in *The Yale Review*, has lifted this name out of the obscurity of nearly three hundred years. Collop (influenced perhaps for the worse by "the seraphic John Donne") is clodded and cloudy with conceits that reach into absurdity. Yet we find in his *Poesis Rediviva* (1656) the poems that follow. "*The Leper Cleansed*," says John Drinkwater, "moves with assured mastery to a close which is as wonderful as anything in Seventeenth Century poetry." The striking phrase, "the rhetoric of a tear", is of course "a lift"—with improvement—from Shirley's,

"If thy face move not, let thy eyes express  
Some rhetoric of thy tears to make him stay . . ."

*The Leper Cleansed*

HEAR, Lord, hear  
The rhetoric of a tear.  
Hear, hear my breast;  
While I knock there, Lord, take no rest.

Open! ah, open wide:  
Thou art the door, Lord, open; hide  
My sin: a spear once entered at thy side.

## JOHN COLLOP

See! ah, see  
A Naaman's leprosy!  
Yet here appears  
A cleansing Jordan in my tears.

Lord, let the faithless see  
Miracles ceased, revive in me.  
The Leper cleansed, Blind healed, Dead raised, by thee.

Whither! ah, whither shall I fly;  
To heaven? My sin, ah, sins there cry!  
Yet mercy, Lord, O mercy; hear  
The atoning incense of my prayer.  
A broken heart thoul't not despise.  
See! see a contrite's sacrifice!  
Keep, keep, vials of wrath, keep still:  
I'll vials, Lord, of odors fill:  
O prayers, sighs, groans, and tears a shower:  
This precious ointment forth I'll pour.  
I'll 'noint, wash, wipe, kiss, wash, wipe, weep;  
My tears, Lord, in thy bottle keep,  
Lest flames of lust and fond desire,  
Kindle fresh fuel for thine ire,  
Which tears must quench: like Magdalene  
I'll wash thee, Lord, till I be clean.



JOHN COLLOP

*To the Soul*

DULL soul, aspire:  
Thou art not earth, mount higher:  
Heaven gave the spark, to it return the fire.

Let sin never quench  
Thy high flamed spirit hence—  
The earth the heat, to Heaven the flame dispense.

Rejoice, rejoice,  
Turn, turn each part a voice;  
While to the heart-strings tuned ye all rejoice.

The house is swept,  
Which sin so long foul kept:  
The penny's found for which the loser wept.

And purged with tears,  
God's Image reappears.  
The penny truly shews whose stamp it bears.

The sheep long lost,  
Sin's wilderness oft crost,  
Is found, regained, returned; spare, spare no cost.

'Tis Heaven's own suit;  
Hark, how it woo's you to 't:  
When Angels need must speak, shall man be mute?

CHARLES COTTON

ENGLAND, 1630-1687

A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY poet and translator—always in difficulties, always happy, always a favorite.

*Tomorrow*

TOMORROW didst thou say?  
Methought I heard Horatio say tomorrow;  
Go to, I will not hear of it: tomorrow!  
'Tis a sharper, who stakes his penury  
Against thy plenty; who takes thy ready cash,  
And pays thee naught but wishes, hopes and promises,  
The currency of idiots; injurious bankrupt,  
That gulls the easy creditor. Tomorrow!

It is a period nowhere to be found  
In all the hoary registers of Time,  
Unless perchance in the *fool's* calendar.  
Wisdom *disclaims* the word, nor holds society  
With those who own it. No, my Horatio,  
'Tis Fancy's child, and Folly is its father;  
Wrought of such stuff as *dreams* are, and as baseless  
As the fantastic visions of the evening.

## JOHN DRYDEN

ENGLAND, 1631-1700

THERE are blemishes upon the fame of Dryden. In spite of sincere attempts to acquit him of time-serving, it appears that he was inclined to truckle to men of power; that his swerving of religious faith was wholly from within is difficult to believe. He confessed that in drama he would if necessary bend his genius to the folly of his age. All this indicates a low moral idealism, even if Dryden had the decency and courage to admit (in the *Ode to the Memory of Mistress Anne Killigrew*) that he had degraded his genius. And aside from moral considerations, there is certainly a great deal of windy and mechanical verse in Dryden's pages.

These things are mentioned first so that they may be known and thrust into the background. For, in spite of imperfections, Dryden was one of the colossi of English letters. Even though we cannot acknowledge him in the foremost rank of poetry, we must concede his place as a leading spirit of modern literature (he was the Ben Jonson of his half-century) and as perhaps the greatest all-around craftsman who ever flourished an English pen.

In the earliest of his critical essays, standing as prefaces to some of his plays, we have the real beginning of modern prose style. Dryden was the first of noteworthy English critics in time, and he is not far from first in place. His powers were leisurely in developing. Only at fifty did he first write satire. Then in the anatomy of political character, *Absalom and Achitophel*, and in the literary satire, *MacFlecknoe*, we have a peerless Dryden. Yet these pieces lack afflatus of intense personal indignation. Like too great a bulk of Dryden's verse, they are outwardly inspired, occasional, journalistic. This is

## JOHN DRYDEN

why Dryden never achieves the pinnacles of Helicon. But within its confines, what verse! As art it is superb: resonance, momentum, claw of word and clutch of phrase, deftness and force of rhythm, subtle perception of character, and the very apotheosis of triumphant face-slapping.

Attempting sheer poetry, Dryden left at least two distinguished examples of the longer lyric, besides some songs in his plays. The *Ode to the Memory of Mistress Anne Killigrew* and the *Alexander's Feast* have secured for Dryden a reputation only a little less lofty now than in the eighteenth century. But most congenial to Dryden's cast of mind were those satires in heroic couplets. Pope wrote of these couplets:

"Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine."

And perhaps with the same passages in mind, Lowell wrote: "In the second class of English poets no one stands so high as Dryden. He was a strong thinker, who sometimes carried common sense to a height where it catches the light of a diviner air, and warmed reason till it had wellnigh the illuminating property of intuition."

### *Under the Portrait of John Milton*

PREFIXED TO "PARADISE LOST," 1688

THREE Poets, in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy and England did adorn.  
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;  
The next in majesty; in both the last.  
The force of nature could no further go:  
To make a third, she joined the former two.

JOHN DRYDEN

*Life a Cheat*

WHEN I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;  
Yet, fooled with hope, men favor the deceit.  
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay:  
To-morrow's falser than the former day;  
Lies worse; and while it says, we shall be blessed  
With some new joys, cuts off what we possessed.  
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,  
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;  
And, from the dregs of life, think to receive  
What the first sprightly running could not give.  
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,  
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.

*Alexander's Feast;*

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC.—AN ODE IN HONOR OF ST.  
CECILIA'S DAY

'T WAS at the royal feast for Persia won  
By Philip's warlike son,  
Aloft, in awful state,  
The godlike hero sate  
On his imperial throne;  
His valiant peers were placed around,  
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound,  
(So should desert in arms be crowned)  
The lovely Thais by his side  
Sate, like a blooming Eastern bride,  
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.  
Happy, happy, happy pair!  
None but the brave,  
None but the brave,  
None but the brave deserves the fair.

## JOHN DRYDEN

Timotheus, placed on high  
Amid the tuneful quire,  
With flying fingers touched the lyre;  
The trembling notes ascend the sky,  
And heavenly joys inspire.  
The song began from Jove,  
Who left his blissful seats above,  
(Such is the power of mighty Love).  
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;  
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,  
When he to fair Olympia pressed,  
And while he sought her snowy breast;  
Then round her slender waist he curled,  
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the  
world,  
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound—  
A present deity! they shout around;  
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.  
With ravished ears  
The monarch hears,  
Assumes the god,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung—  
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young;  
The jolly god in triumph comes:  
Sound the trumpets! beat the drums!  
Flushed with a purple grace,  
He shows his honest face:  
Now give the hautboys breath—he comes, he comes!  
Bacchus, ever fair and young,  
Drinking joys did first ordain.  
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure;  
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:

## JOHN DRYDEN

Rich the treasure,  
Sweet the pleasure;  
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;  
Fought all his battle o'er again;  
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew  
the slain.

The master saw the madness rise—  
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;  
And while he Heaven and Earth defied,  
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.

He chose a mournful Muse,  
Soft pity to infuse:  
He swung Darius great and good,  
By too severe a fate  
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen—  
Fallen from his high estate,  
And weltering in his blood;  
Deserted, at his utmost need,  
By those his former bounty fed;  
On the bare earth exposed he lies,  
With not a friend to close his eyes.  
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate  
Revolving in his altered soul  
The various turns of chance below;  
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,  
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see  
That Love was in the next degree;  
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,  
For pity melts the mind to love.  
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,  
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

JOHN DRYDEN

War, he sung, is toil and trouble;  
Honor but an empty bubble—  
Never ending, still beginning—  
Fighting still, and still destroying;  
If the world be worth thy winning,  
Think, O think it worth enjoying!  
Lovely Thais sits beside thee—  
Take the goods the gods provide thee.  
The many rend the sky with loud applause;  
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.  
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,  
Gazed on the fair  
Who caused his care,  
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,  
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.  
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,  
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again!  
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain,  
Break his bands of sleep asunder,  
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.  
Hark, hark! the horrid sound  
Has raised up his head!  
As awaked from the dead,  
And amazed, he stares around.  
Revenge! revenge! Timotheus cries;  
See the Furies arise!  
See the snakes that they rear,  
How they hiss in their hair,  
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!  
Behold a ghastly band,  
Each a torch in his hand!  
These are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,



JOHN DRYDEN

And unburied remain,  
Inglorious, on the plain!  
Give the vengeance due  
To the valiant crew.

Behold how they toss their torches on high,  
How they point to the Persian abodes,  
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!  
The princes applaud with a furious joy,  
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;  
Thais led the way  
To light him to his prey,  
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus, long ago—  
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,  
While organs yet were mute—  
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,  
And sounding lyre,  
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.  
At last divine Cecilia came,  
Inventress of the vocal frame;<sup>1</sup>  
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store  
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,  
And added length to solemn sounds,  
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.  
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
Or both divide the crown:  
He raised a mortal to the skies,  
She drew an angel down!

<sup>1</sup> the organ.

## JOHN DRYDEN

### *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*

*Cecilia is the patron saint of music, especially of organ music. This Dryden poem is based on the old idea (the true idea) that in the beginning the atoms of the universe swung into their orderly places under the drive of musical harmony, a harmony now known as "the music of the spheres." We are told at the end of the poem that this music will end in one terrific note—the sound of the Trumpet on the Day of Judgment, the closing of man's strange eventful history.*

#### I.

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
This universal frame began.  
When Nature underneath a heap  
Of jarring atoms lay,  
And could not heave her head,  
The tuneful voice was heard from high,  
Arise, ye more than dead!  
Then cold and hot and moist and dry  
In order to their stations leap,  
And Music's power obey.  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
This universal frame began:  
From harmony to harmony  
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing full in Man.

#### II.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?  
When Jubal struck the chorded shell  
His listening brethren stood around,

## JOHN DRYDEN

And, wondering, on their faces fell  
To worship that celestial sound.  
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell  
Within the hollow of that shell  
That spoke so sweetly and so well.  
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

### III.

The trumpet's loud clangor  
Excites us to arms,  
With shrill notes of anger  
And mortal alarms.  
The double double double beat  
Of the thundering drum  
Cries, "Hark! the foes come;  
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

### IV.

The soft complaining flute  
In dying notes discovers  
The woes of hopeless lovers,  
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

### V.

Sharp violins proclaim  
Their jealous pangs and desperation,  
Fury, frantic indignation,  
Depth of pains, and height of passion  
For the fair, disdainful dame.

### VI.

But oh! what art can teach,  
What human voice can reach,

## JOHN DRYDEN

The sacred organ's praise?  
Notes inspiring holy love,  
Notes that wing their heavenly ways  
To mend the choirs above.

### VII.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,  
And trees uprooted left their place  
Sequacious of the lyre;  
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:  
When to her organ vocal breath was given  
An angel heard, and straight appeared—  
Mistaking Earth for Heaven!

### GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays  
The spheres began to move,  
And sung the great Creator's praise  
To all the blest above;  
So when the last and dreadful hour  
This crumbling pageant shall devour,  
The trumpet shall be heard on high,  
The dead shall live, the living die,  
And Music shall untune the sky.

JOHN DRYDEN

*Song*

**F**AREWELL, ungrateful traitor!  
Farewell, my perjured swain!  
Let never injured creature  
Believe a man again.  
The pleasure of possessing  
Surpasses all expressing;  
But 'tis too short a blessing,  
And love too long a pain.

'Tis easy to deceive us,  
In pity of your pain;  
But when we love, you leave us,  
To rail at you in vain.  
Before we have descried it,  
There is no bliss beside it;  
But she, that once has tried it,  
Will never love again.

The passion you pretended,  
Was only to obtain;  
But when the charm is ended,  
The charmer you disdain.  
Your love by ours we measure,  
Till we have lost our treasure;  
But dying is a pleasure,  
When living is a pain.

JOHN DRYDEN

*Achitophel (Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl  
of Shaftesbury)*

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

OF these the false Achitophel was first;  
A name to all succeeding ages curst:  
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,  
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;  
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;  
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;  
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay:  
A daring pilot in extremity,  
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high  
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,  
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.  
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,  
And thin partitions do their bounds divide:  
Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,  
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?  
Punish a body which he could not please;  
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?

*Zimri (George Villiers, Duke of  
Buckingham)*

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

*Here is one of the most brilliant passages in the language:  
note the glittering epigrams.*

A MAN so various, that he seemed to be  
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.  
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;  
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;

JOHN DRYDEN

But, in the course of one revolving moon,  
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon;  
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,  
Beside ten-thousand freaks that died in thinking.  
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,  
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!  
Railing and praising were his usual themes,  
And both, to show his judgement, in extremes;  
So over violent, or over civil,  
That every man with him was God or Devil.  
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:  
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.  
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,  
He had his jest, and they had his estate.

ROBERT WILDE  
ENGLAND, 17TH CENTURY

*Epitaph*

**H**ERE lies a piece of Christ; a star in dust;  
A vein of gold; a china dish that must  
Be used in heaven, when God shall feed the just.

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER  
ENGLAND, 1647-1680

*On Charles II*

**H**ERE lies our Sovereign Lord the King,  
Whose word no man relies on,  
Who never said a foolish thing,  
Nor ever did a wise one.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1658

*The Queen of Fairies*

COME follow, follow me,  
You, fairy elves that be,  
Which circle on the green—  
Come follow Mab, your queen!  
Hand in hand, let's dance a round,  
For this place is fairy ground.

When mortals are at rest  
And snoring in their nest,  
Unheard and unespied,  
Through key-holes we do glide;  
Over tables, stools and shelves,  
We trip it with our fairy elves.

And, if the house be foul,  
Or platter, dish, or bowl,  
Up stairs we nimbly creep,  
And find the sluts asleep:  
There we pinch their arms and thighs—  
None escapes, nor none espies.

But if the house be swept,  
And from uncleanness kept,  
We praise the household maid,  
And surely she is paid;  
For we do use before we go,  
To drop a tester in her shoe.



ANONYMOUS

Upon a mushroom's head,  
Our table we do spread;  
A grain of rye, or wheat,  
Is manchet, which we eat.  
Pearly drops of dew we drink  
In acorn cups filled to the brink.

The brains of nightingales,  
With unctuous dew of snails,  
Between two nutshells stewed,  
Is meat that's easily chewed;  
And the beards of little mice  
Do make a feast of wondrous price.

The grasshopper and the fly,  
Serve for our minstrelsy.  
Grace said, we dance a while,  
And so the time beguile;  
And when the moon doth hide her head,  
The glow-worm lights us home to bed.

On tops of dewy grass,  
So nimbly do we pass,  
The young and tender stalk  
Never bends when we do walk;  
Yet in the morning may be seen  
Where we, the night before, have been.

## COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA (ANNE FINCH)

ENGLAND, 1660-1720

LADY WINCHELSEA had touches of the divine fire; and it appears that she was one of the three or four who had these touches in the long stretch between Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Thomson's *The Seasons*. She was celebrated by Pope under the name of Ardelia.

### *A Nocturnal Reverie*

IN such a night . . .  
When in some river, overhung with green,  
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen,  
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,  
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,  
When spring the woodbine and the bramble-rose,  
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,  
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,  
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes,  
Where scattered glowworms—but in twilight fine—  
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine,  
While Salisbury stands the test of every light,  
In perfect charms and perfect beauty bright;  
When odors, which declined repelling day,  
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;  
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,  
And falling waters we distinctly hear;  
When through the gloom more venerable shows  
Some ancient fabric awful in repose;  
While sunburned hills their swarthy looks conceal,  
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;

## ANNE FINCH

When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,  
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,  
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,  
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;  
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,  
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;  
When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,  
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;  
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,  
Which but endures, whilst tyrant Man doth sleep;  
When a sedate content the spirit feels,  
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;  
But silent musings urge the mind to seek  
Something too high for syllables to speak;  
Till the free soul to a composedness charmed,  
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,  
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,  
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own—  
In such a night let me abroad remain,  
Till morning breaks and all's confused again;  
Our cares, our toils, our clamors are renewed,  
Our pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

## JOHN, LORD CUTTS

ENGLAND, 1661-1707

### *Song*

ONLY tell her that I love:  
Leave the rest to her and Fate:  
Some kind planet from above  
May perhaps her pity move:  
Lovers on their stars must wait—  
Only tell her that I love!

JOHN, LORD CUTTS

Why, O why should I despair!  
Mercy's pictured in her eye:  
If she once vouchsafe to hear,  
Welcome Hope and farewell Fear!  
She's too good to let me die.—  
Why, O why should I despair?

WILLIAM WALSH

ENGLAND, 1663-1708

*The Despairing Lover*

DISTRACTED with care  
For Phyllis the fair,  
Since nothing could move her,  
Poor Damon, her lover,  
Resolves in despair  
No longer to languish,  
Nor bear so much anguish,  
But, mad with his love,  
To a precipice goes,  
Where a leap from above  
Would finish his woes.

When in rage he came there,  
Beholding how steep  
The sides did appear,  
And the bottom how deep,  
His torments projecting,  
And sadly reflecting  
That a lover forsaken  
A new love may get,

## WILLIAM WALSH

But a neck when once broken  
Can never be set,  
And, that he could die  
Whenever he would,  
Whereas he could live  
But as long as he could,  
How grievous soever  
The torment might grow,  
He scorned to endeavor  
To finish it so,  
But, bold, unconcerned  
At thoughts of the pain,  
He calmly returned  
To his cottage again.

## JONATHAN SWIFT

ENGLAND, 1667-1745

DRYDEN, it will be recalled, early said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." Yet if poetry resides in emotion communicated, we may, I think, grant the title to Swift in rare passages where his bitterness darkens the page. Much of his verse is very bad, even as verse; much of it is revolting in thought; but where will one find other such bawls of savage humor as in Jove's speech in *The Day of Judgment*, and such cynicism as in the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*? In these verses, he describes the reaction of the world upon his decease. The cynicism of the piece almost amounts to melancholy.

JONATHAN SWIFT

*From "A Rhapsody on Poetry"*

HOBBS clearly proves that every creature  
Lives in a state of war by nature.  
The greater for the smallest watch,  
But meddle seldom with their match.  
A whale of moderate size will draw  
A shoal of herrings down his maw;  
A fox with geese his belly crams;  
A wolf destroys a thousand lambs.  
But search among the rhyming race,  
The brave are worried by the base.  
If on Parnassus' top you sit,  
You rarely bite, are always bit.

\* \* \* \* \*

The vermin only tease and pinch  
Their foes superior by an inch.  
So, naturalists observe, a flea  
Hath smaller fleas that on him prey;  
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,  
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.  
Thus every poet in his kind  
Is bit by him that comes behind:  
Who, though too little to be seen,  
Can tease and gall and give the spleen.

JONATHAN SWIFT

*From "On the Death of Dr. Swift"*

*This "poem" was suggested by the maxim of Rochefoucauld that "In the adversity of our best friends, we always find something that does not displease us."*

THE time is not remote when I  
Must by the course of nature die;  
When, I foresee, my special friends  
Will try to find their private ends;  
And, though 'tis hardly understood  
Which way my death can do them good,  
Yet thus, methinks, I hear them speak:  
"See how the Dean begins to break!  
"He recollects not what he says;  
"He cannot call his friends to mind;  
"Forgets the place where he last dined;  
"Plies you with stories o'er and o'er;  
"He told them fifty times before.  
"His stomach, too, begins to fail:  
"Last year we thought him strong and hale;  
"But now he's quite another thing:  
"I wish he may hold out till spring!"

Behold the fatal day arrive!  
"How is the Dean?" "He's just alive."  
Now the departing prayer is read;  
He hardly breathes—the Dean is dead.  
Before the passing-bell begun,  
The news through half the town is run.  
From Dublin soon to London spread,  
'Tis told at court, "The Dean is dead."  
And Lady Suffolk, in the spleen,  
Runs laughing up to tell the Queen.

JONATHAN SWIFT

The Queen, so gracious mild and good,  
Cries, "Is he gone! 'tis time he should.  
"He's dead, you say, then let him rot.  
"I'm glad the medals were forgot.  
"I promised him, I own, but when?  
"I only was the princess then."

My female friends, whose tender hearts  
Have better learned to act their parts,  
Receive the news in doleful dumps:  
"The Dean is dead: (Pray what are trumps?)  
"Then, Lord have mercy on his soul!  
"(Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)  
"Six Deans, they say, must bear the pall:  
"(I wish I knew what king to call.)"

WILLIAM CONGREVE

ENGLAND, 1670-1729

*A Hue and Cry after Fair Amoret*

**F**AIR Amoret is gone astray—  
Pursue and seek her, every lover:  
I'll tell the signs by which you may  
The wandering Shepherdess discover.

Coquette and coy at once her air,  
Both studied, though both seem neglected:  
Careless she is, with artful care,  
Affecting to seem unaffected.



WILLIAM CONGREVE

With skill her eyes dart every glance,  
Yet change so soon you'd ne'er suspect them;  
For she'd persuade they wound by chance,  
Though certain aim and art direct them.

She likes herself, yet others hates  
For that which in herself she prizes;  
And, while she laughs at them, forgets  
She is the thing that she despises.

*Lesbia*

WHEN Lesbia first I saw, so heavenly fair,  
With eyes so bright and with that awful air.  
I thought my heart would durst so high aspire  
As bold as his who snatched celestial fire.  
But soon as ever the beauteous idiot spoke,  
Forth from her coral lips such folly broke:  
Like balm the trickling nonsense healed my wound,  
And what her eyes enthralled, her tongue unbound.

*From "The Mourning Bride"*

MUSIC hath charms to soothe a savage breast,  
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.  
I've read that things inanimate have moved,  
And, as with living souls, have been informed,  
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.

## JOSEPH ADDISON

ENGLAND, 1672-1719

ADDISON'S poetry in general is rhetorical prose in verse, though his poetic tragedy *Cato*, which Samuel Johnson pronounced the noblest production of his genius, is starred with lofty poetic passages. Voltaire thought "Mr. Addison's *Cato* the greatest character that ever was brought on any stage." His most original production was the series of sketches in the *Spectator*, in which Sir Roger de Coverly is the central figure.

### *Cato's Soliloquy on Immortality*

FROM "CATO"

IT must be so.—Plato, thou reasonest well!—  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?  
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,  
Of falling into naught? why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?  
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us:  
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man.  
Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!  
Through what variety of untried being,  
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?  
The wide, the unbounded prospect, lies before me;  
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.  
Here will I hold. If there's a power above us  
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud  
Through all her works) he must delight in virtue;  
And that which he delights in must be happy.

JOSEPH ADDISON

But when? or where? This world was made for Cæsar.  
I'm weary of conjectures. This must end them.

(*Laying his hand on his sword.*)

Thus am I doubly armed: my death and life,  
My bane and antidote, are both before me.  
This in a moment brings me to an end;  
But this informs me I shall never die.  
The soul, secure in her existence, smiles  
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.  
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;  
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
Unhurt amidst the wars of elements,  
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

*An Ode: the Spacious Firmament*

THE spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim.  
The unwearied Sun from day to day  
Does his Creator's power display;  
And publishes to every land  
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;  
And nightly to the listening Earth  
Repeats the story of her birth;  
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,  
And all the planets in their turn,  
Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

## JOSEPH ADDISON

What though in solemn silence all  
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;  
What though nor real voice nor sound  
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?  
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice;  
For ever singing as they shine,  
'The Hand that made us is divine.'

ISAAC WATTS  
ENGLAND, 1674-1748

### *The Day of Judgement*

*This fearsome poem is interesting as showing the dark horrific dream of a literal hell-fire that haunted men in the centuries before Emanuel Swedenborg rose in the eighteenth century to fling the light of reason upon this planetary darkness. In his "Heaven and Hell" (one of the great books of the world) he reveals the real hell—a hell terrific enough—the hell that men themselves create—the hell that begins here on earth and goes on into the hereafter as the natural, inevitable, consequence of an evil and disordered life.*

WHEN the fierce North-wind with his airy forces  
Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury;  
And the red lightning with a storm of hail comes  
Rushing amain down;

How the poor sailors stand amazed and tremble,  
While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,  
Roars a loud onset to the gaping waters  
Quick to devour them.

ISAAC WATTS

Such shall the noise be, and the wild disorder  
(If things eternal may be like these earthly)  
Such the dire terror when the great Archangel  
Shakes the creation;

Tears the strong pillars of the vault of Heaven,  
Breaks up old marble, the repose of princes,  
Sees the graves open, and the bones arising,  
Flames all around them.

Hark, the shrill outcries of the guilty wretches!  
Lively bright horror and amazing anguish  
Stare thro' their eyelids, while the living worm lies  
Gnawing within them.

Thoughts, like old vultures, prey upon their heart-  
strings,  
And the smart twinges, when the eye beholds the  
Lofty Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance  
Rolling afore him.

Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver,  
While devils push them to the pit wide-yawning  
Hideous and gloomy, to receive them headlong  
Down to the center!

Stop here, my fancy: (all away, ye horrid  
Doleful ideas!) come, arise to Jesus,  
How He sits God-like! and the saints around Him  
Throned, yet adoring!

O may I sit there when He comes triumphant,  
Dooming the nations! then ascend to glory,  
While our Hosannas all along the passage  
Shout the Redeemer.

## EDWARD YOUNG

ENGLAND, 1684-1765

YOUNG was an Episcopal clergyman and at one time was chaplain to George II.

It is probable that the remarkable but very unequal *Night Thoughts* of Young will never recover much of the great reputation which it held for long years. "It has a tone", says Saintsbury, "only to be described as theatrical-religious." However, "the poem deserves the praise due to very fine and, in part at least, very original versification." To George Eliot, "the sweet garden-breath of early enjoyment lingers about many a page of the *Night Thoughts*, giving an extrinsic charm to passages of stilted rhetoric and false sentiment. It [his poetry] baptizes egoism as religion."

By a strange grotesquerie, the work of Young which least declines from its general excellence is the *Love of Fame, or The Universal Passion*, which anticipates the mold and method of Pope's best satire. Satire is doubtless only one of the outlying provinces of poetry, but it is often fascinating to read. Doctor Johnson, having called *Love of Fame* "a very great performance", added, as disparagement, that it is "a series of epigrams"; but this, as Saintsbury points out, should hardly be a bar to its popularity nowadays.

### *Man*

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

HOW poor, how rich, how abject, how august,  
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!  
How passing wonder He who made him such!  
Who centered in our make such strange extremes,

EDWARD YOUNG

From different natures marvelously mixed,  
Connection exquisite of distant worlds!  
Distinguished link in being's endless chain!  
Midway from nothing to the Deity!  
A beam ethereal, sullied, and absorpt!  
Though sullied and dishonored, still divine;  
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!  
An heir of glory, a frail child of dust!  
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!  
A worm! a god!—I tremble at myself,  
And in myself am lost. At home a stranger,  
Thought wanders up and down, surprised, aghast,  
And wondering at her own. How reason reels!

Oh, what a miracle to man is man!  
Triumphantly distressed! What joy! what dread!  
Alternately transported and alarmed!  
What can preserve my life? or what destroy?  
An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;  
Legions of angels can't confine me there.

*The Lapse of Time*

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

THE bell strikes one. We take no note of time  
But from its loss; to give it then a tongue  
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,  
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,  
It is the knell of my departed hours.  
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.  
It is the signal that demands dispatch;  
How much is to be done! My hopes and fears  
Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge  
Look down—on what? A fathomless abyss!  
A dread eternity! how surely mine!

EDWARD YOUNG

Oh, the dark days of vanity! while here  
How tasteless! and how terrible when gone!  
Gone? they ne'er go; when past they haunt us still:  
The spirit walks of every day deceased  
And smiles an angel, or a Fury frowns.  
Nor death nor life delights us. If time past  
And time possess both pain us, what can please?  
That which the Deity to please ordained—  
*Time used!* The man who consecrates his hours  
By vigorous efforts and an honest aim,  
At once he draws the sting of life and death:  
He walks with Nature, and her paths are peace.

*Procrastination*

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

**B**E wise to-day: 'tis madness to defer:  
Next day the fatal precedent will plead:  
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.  
Procrastination is the thief of time.

\* \* \* \* \*

All promise is poor dilatory man,  
And that through every stage: when young, indeed,  
In full content we, sometimes, nobly rest,  
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,  
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.  
At thirty man suspects himself a fool;  
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;  
At fifty chides his infamous delay,  
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;  
In all the magnanimity of thought  
Resolves, and re-resolves, then, dies the same.



EDWARD YOUNG

*Fame and Envy*

FROM "EPISTLE TO POPE"

WITH fame in just proportion envy grows;  
The man that makes a character makes foes;  
Slight peevish insects round a genius rise,  
As a bright day awakes the world of flies.  
With hearty malice, but with feeble wing,  
To show they live, they flutter and they sting;  
But as by depredations wasps proclaim  
The fairest fruit, so these the fairest fame.

GEORGE BERKELEY

ENGLAND, 1685-1753

*From "The Prospect in America"*

WESTWARD the course of empire takes its way:  
The four first acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day:  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

## ALEXANDER POPE

ENGLAND, 1688-1744

WHAT has become of the great poet Alexander Pope, the darling and the dread of his age?

That he was indeed "great" neither Addison nor Swift nor any of his contemporaries, even those who rankled under his malignant satire, would have denied. Voltaire thought Pope "the most elegant, the most correct poet; and, at the same time, the most harmonious that England ever gave birth to." Going a step further, Byron acclaimed him "the most perfect of our poets and the purest of our moralists. . . . He is the moral poet of all civilization, and, as such, let us hope that he will one day be the national poet of mankind." Nor did Byron confine his praise to moral considerations; he appeared to believe that Pope showed, in his curious *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, the quality of imagination possessed by the romantic poets. But Emerson, in his *English Traits*, dismisses Pope in this wise: "Thus poetry is degraded and made ornamental. Pope and his school wrote poetry fit to put around frosted cake."

Was Pope a poet? The answer to the old question rests, I suppose, on one couplet in his *Essay on Criticism*, a work which Doctor Johnson thought would have alone placed its author among the first critics and first poets of England. To my mind, the most remarkable thing about the poem is that Pope composed it at the age of twenty. It contains the striking couplet:

"True wit is nature to advantage dressed;  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Now, almost all his life Pope strove for "true wit", to sharpen, to polish the ideas of others. The very couplet

## ALEXANDER POPE

in which he makes this (as we may call it) declaration of intent, is a boiling-down of half a dozen prose lines of the French critic Boileau. Pope, therefore, is "classic" since he cares more for the expression of thought than for thought itself.

We see, then, the restriction self-imposed by Pope. He is not trying to express the wild, sweet things within him, as other poets do: he does not feel the creative impulse that makes all emotions seem new. No, it is not the stir of the heart that sets his pen in motion, but the brain of the artificer, striving to put an idea compactly, pointedly, smoothly.

Therefore we are not surprised to discover that most of Pope's writing is bare-faced borrowing, or translation. In these—strictly within the limits he set himself—he is successful, even though he brought forth an *Iliad* that was not Homer but Pope. He made the ten-syllable rhymed couplet "light, bright, glittering, varied in a manner almost impossible to account for, tipped with the neatest, smartest, sharpest rhyme, and volleying on the dazzled . . . reader a sort of salvo of *feux-d'artifice*, skipping, crackling, scattering color and sound all round and about him." These couplets, usually concluding their thought within themselves, Pope built with an uncanny skill into "paragraphs".

But these things leave us cold. Only at whiles does Pope do more than excite our admiration. In his satires, however, he occasionally rises from intellect to passion, because he himself is transported. Thus in *The Dunciad* (epic of the dunces) and in the "character of Atticus" (where he vents his spite against Addison) we are aware that Pope was a man of organs, senses, passions—in other words, a poet. Unfortunate it is that personal malice should have been the chief "inspiration" for Pope's lofty flights; but Pope was a notoriously faulty man, being in the first place diseased, splenetic, then snobbish, stingy, and unveracious.

## ALEXANDER POPE

I quote on this point an interesting passage from Alfred Welsh:

"[His character was] a collection of contradictions. Professing contempt of the world, he lived upon its pleasure. Pretending to neglect fame, he courted it. Affecting to ignore the critics, he writhed under their attacks. Scorning the great, he loved to enumerate the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted. Tells his friends that 'he has a heart for all, a home for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all,' yet entertained scantily. . . . Avowing benevolence, he was guilty of meanness which it is impossible to defend. Secretly or openly, he pursued with an implacable vengeance, all who questioned or slighted his poetical supremacy; and still he could write:

'Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the faults I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.'

Dennis, who had been wantonly assailed, speaks of him as a 'little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candor, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity.' In social intercourse he delighted in artifice, and was always an actor. If he wanted a favor, he contrived to obtain it indirectly, by unsuspected hints at its general convenience. It is said that he hardly drank tea without a stratagem, and used to play the politician about cabbages and turnips."

But of Pope's masterpiece we have yet to speak. The most airy, the most ingenious and delightful of his compositions is generally considered to be *The Rape of the Lock*. Pope himself declared, and critics have agreed, that he never showed more skill than in this mock-heroic work which holds a recognized supremacy among the productions of "the drawing-room muse." In that last phrase is the secret of its success. For in *The Rape of the Lock*,

## ALEXANDER POPE

Pope approaches a subject with which he has first-hand acquaintance—namely, the manners, prejudices, opinions of the set in which he moved, the drawing-room set, wherein mingled belles, beaux, dowagers, coxcombs, coquettes, virtuosos, and the rest of the character of Queen Anne's age. How strikingly Pope brings out the spirit of the time in its mingling of cold cynicism with the most formal manners of chivalry!

### *Greatness*

FROM "ESSAY ON MAN"

**H**ONOR and shame from no condition rise:  
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.

ALEXANDER POPE

*The Future*

FROM "ESSAY ON MAN"

HEAVEN from all creatures hides the book of fate,  
All but the page prescribed, their present state:  
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:  
Or who could suffer being here below?

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,  
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?  
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,  
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.  
O blindness to the future! kindly given,  
That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven,  
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
A hero perish or a sparrow fall;  
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,  
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;  
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.  
What future bliss he gives not thee to know,  
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.  
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:  
Man never is, but always to be blest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;  
His soul proud science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk or milky way,  
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,  
Behind the cloud-topped hill, a humbler heaven—

ALEXANDER POPE

Some safer world, in depth of woods embraced,  
Some happier island in the watery waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.  
To be, contents his natural desire,  
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;  
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

*Nature's Chain*

FROM "ESSAY ON MAN"

LOOK round our world, behold the chain of love  
Combining all below and all above;  
See plastic nature working to this end,  
The single atoms each to other tend,  
Attract, attracted to, the next in place,  
Formed and impelled its neighbor to embrace.

See matter next, with various life endued,  
Press to one center still—the general good.  
See dying vegetables life sustain,  
See life dissolving vegetate again:  
All forms that perish other forms supply  
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)  
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,  
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.  
Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;  
One all-extending, all-preserving Soul  
Connects each being, greatest with the least;  
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;  
All served, all serving; nothing stands alone;  
The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

## ALEXANDER POPE

Has God, thou fool! worked solely for thy good,  
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?  
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,  
For him as kindly spreads the flowery lawn.  
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?  
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.  
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?  
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.  
The bounding steed you pompously bestride  
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.  
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?  
The birds of heaven shall vindicate their grain.  
Thine the full harvest of the golden year?  
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer:  
The hog that plows not, nor obeys thy call,  
Lives on the labors of this lord of all.

### *Fragments from "Essay on Man"*

**K**NOW then thyself, presume not God to scan:  
The proper study of mankind is Man.

What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?  
Alas? not all the blood of all the Howards.

A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod:  
An honest man's the noblest work of God.

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,  
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind:  
Or ravished with the whistling of a name,  
See Cromwell damned to everlasting fame.



ALEXANDER POPE

Know then the truth (enough for man to know)  
Virtue alone is happiness below.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;  
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;  
All discord, harmony not understood;  
All partial evil, universal good;  
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,  
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.<sup>1</sup>

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien  
As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,  
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;  
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,  
A little louder, but as empty quite;  
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,  
And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age.  
Pleased with this bauble still, as that before,  
Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor day is o'er.

For forms of government let fools contest;  
Whate'er is best administered is best,  
For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right,  
In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is charity.

<sup>1</sup> Whatever is, is in its causes just.—Dryden. This epigram is reasonable—not so the saying of Pope: "Whatever is, is right." for the world is peppered with things that are not right, yet those things are in their causes just; for they all rise out of law.—E. M.

ALEXANDER POPE

*The Author's Miseries*

FROM "PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES"

SHUT, shut the door, good John! fatigued I said,  
Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.  
The Dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt,  
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:  
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,  
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

\* \* \* \* \*

A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped:  
If foes, they write—if friends, they read me dead.  
Seized and tied down to judge, how wretched I!  
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie:  
To laugh were want of goodness and of grace,  
And to be grave exceeds all power of face.  
I sit with sad civility, I read  
With honest anguish and an aching head;  
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,  
This saving counsel, "Keep your piece nine years."

"Nine years!" cries he who, high in Drury Lane,  
Lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,  
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term ends,  
Obliged by hunger, and request of friends.  
"The piece, you think, is incorrect? why, take it,  
I'm all submission; what you'd have it, make it."  
Three things another's modest wishes bound—  
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are, who to my person pay their court:  
I cough like *Horace*, and, though lean, am short,  
*Ammon's* great son one shoulder had too high,

## ALEXANDER POPE

Such *Ovid's* nose, and "Sir! you have an eye."  
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see  
All that disgraced my betters met in me.  
Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,  
"Just so immortal *Maro* held his head":  
And when I die, be sure you let me know  
Great *Homer* died three thousand years ago.  
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown  
Dipped me in ink, my parents', or my own?  
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,  
I lisped in numbers for the numbers came.  
I left no calling for this idle trade,  
No duty broke, no father disobeyed.  
The muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,  
To help me through this long disease, my life.

### *On a Certain Lady at Court*

I KNOW a thing that's most uncommon;  
    (Envy, be silent and attend!)  
I know a reasonable woman,  
    Handsome and witty, yet a friend.

Not warped by passion, awed by rumor;  
    Not grave through pride, nor gay through folly—  
An equal mixture of good-humor  
    And sensible soft melancholy.

"Has she no faults then (Envy says) Sir?"  
    Yes, she has one, I must aver:  
When all the world conspires to praise her,  
    The woman's deaf, and does not hear.

ALEXANDER POPE

*On Mrs. Corbet*

HERE rests a woman, good without pretense,  
Blessed with plain reason, and with sober sense:  
No conquests she, but o'er herself, desired;  
No arts essayed, but not to be admired.  
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,  
Convinced that virtue only is our own.  
So unaffected, so composed a mind;  
So firm, so soft; so strong, yet so refined;  
Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried;  
The saint sustained it, but the woman died.

*From "The Rape of the Lock"*

AND now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,  
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.  
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,  
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.  
A heavenly image in the glass appears—  
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;  
The inferior priestess, at her altar's side,  
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.  
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here  
The various offerings of the world appear;  
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,  
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.  
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,  
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.  
The tortoise here and elephant unite,  
Transformed to combs—the speckled, and the white.  
Here files of pins extend their shining rows;  
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.

## ALEXANDER POPE

Now awful beauty puts on all its arms:  
The fair each moment rises in her charms,  
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,  
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;  
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,  
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.  
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,  
These set the head, and these divide the hair;  
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;  
And Betty's praised for labors not her own. . . .  
Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone,  
But every eye was fixed on her alone.  
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,  
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore;  
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose—  
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those;  
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;  
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.  
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike;  
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.  
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,  
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:  
If to her share some female errors fall,  
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all.

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,  
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind  
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck  
With shining ringlets the smooth, ivory neck.  
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,  
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.  
With hairy springes we the birds betray;  
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey:  
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,  
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

ALEXANDER POPE

*The Universal Prayer*

DEO OPT. MAX.

*"The Universal Prayer" is as simple in utterance as it is large in scope and practical in bearing. The name Jove may be unpleasant to some ears: it is to mine—not because it is the name given their deity by men who had little outward revelation; but because of the associations which the wanton poets, not the good philosophers, have gathered about it. Here let it stand, as Pope meant it, for one of the names of the Unknown God.*

FATHER of all! in every age,  
In every clime adored—  
By saint, by savage, and by sage—  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood,  
Who all my sense confined  
To know but this: that Thou art good,  
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,  
To see the good from ill;  
And, binding Nature fast in fate,  
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,  
Or warns me not to do,  
This teach me more than Hell to shun,  
That more than Heaven pursue.

What blessings Thy free bounty gives  
Let me not cast away—  
For God is paid when man receives:  
To enjoy is to obey.

ALEXANDER POPE

Yet not to earth's contracted span  
Thy goodness let me bound,  
Or think Thee Lord alone of man,  
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand  
Presume Thy bolts to throw,  
And deal damnation round the land  
On each I judge Thy foe.

If I am right, Thy grace impart  
Still in the right to stay:  
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart  
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride  
Or impious discontent,  
At aught Thy wisdom has denied,  
Or aught Thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,  
Since quickened by Thy breath;  
Oh, lead me, wheresoe'er I go,  
Through this day's life or death.

This day be bread and peace my lot:  
All else beneath the sun  
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,  
And let Thy will be done.

ALEXANDER POPE

To Thee, whose temple is all space,  
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies—  
One chorus let all being raise!  
All nature's incense rise!

*A Little Learning Is a Dangerous Thing*

FROM "ESSAY ON CRITICISM"

A LITTLE learning is a dangerous thing;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:  
These shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.  
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,  
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,  
While from the bounded level of our mind,  
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;  
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise,  
New distant scenes of endless science rise!  
So pleased at first the towering Alps we try,  
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,  
The eternal snows appear already past,  
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;  
But those attained, we tremble to survey  
The growing labors of the lengthened way,  
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,  
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!



ALEXANDER POPE

*The Art of Writing*

FROM "ESSAY ON CRITICISM"

**B**UT most by numbers judge a poet's song,  
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or  
wrong:

In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,  
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;  
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,  
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,  
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.  
These equal syllables alone require,  
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;  
While expletives their feeble aid do join,  
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:  
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes  
With sure returns of still expected rhymes:  
Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze',  
In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees':  
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep',  
The reader's threatened, not in vain, with 'sleep':

Then, at the last and only couplet fraught  
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,  
A needless Alexandrine ends the song  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

\* \* \* \* \*

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

\* \* \* \* \*

Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,  
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;

## ALEXANDER POPE

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.  
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
The line too labors, and the words move slow:  
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.

### *Addison*

FROM "EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT"

WERE there one whose fires  
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;  
Blest with each talent and each art to please,  
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:  
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,  
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,  
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,  
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;  
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,  
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;  
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,  
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;  
Alike, reserved to blame, or to commend,  
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend:  
Dreading even fools, by flatterers besieged,  
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;  
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,  
And sit attentive to his own applause;  
While wits and Templars every sentence raise,  
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—  
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?  
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he!

ALEXANDER POPE

*Fragments from Other Poems by  
Alexander Pope*

**L**IKE following life through creatures you dissect,  
You lose it in the moment you detect.

'Tis education forms the common mind;  
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

Who builds a church to God and not to fame,  
Will never mark the marble with his name.

To rest, the cushion and soft dean invite,  
Who never mentions hell to ears polite.

Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,  
In action faithful, and in honor clear;  
Who broke no promise, served no private end,  
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.

True wit is Nature to advantage dressed;  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march and energy divine.

## JAMES THOMSON

SCOTLAND, 1700-1748

THOMSON'S *Seasons* was for many years the most popular volume of poetry in England. It was to be found in every home from castle to cottage, and passages from the poem were familiar to every schoolboy. The appreciation of the work was more affectionate than critical. Its great service was to call its generation of readers out of doors and teach them to look on nature with enthusiasm.

I quote from G. H. Mair's *Modern English Literature*: "Thomson wrote two poems respectively in the Spenserian and Miltonic manner, the former *The Castle of Indolence*, the latter *The Seasons*. The Spenserian manner is caught very effectively, but the adoption of the style of *Paradise Lost*, with its allusiveness, circumlocution and weight, removes any freshness *The Seasons* might have had. As it is, hardly anything is directly named; birds are always 'the feathered tribe' and everything else has a similar polite generality for its title. . . . This [the style of *The Seasons*] suited the eighteenth-century reader well, for not understanding Nature herself, he was naturally obliged to read her in translations."

### *The Nightingale Bereaved*

FROM "THE SEASONS"

OF T when, returning with her loaded bill,  
The astonished mother finds a vacant nest,  
By the hard hand of unrelenting clown  
Robbed; to the ground the vain provision falls;

JAMES THOMSON

Her pinions ruffle, and low-drooping scarce  
Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade;  
Where, all abandoned to despair, she sings  
Her sorrows through the night; and on the bough  
Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall  
Takes up again her lamentable strain  
Of winding woe, till, wide around, the woods  
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

*Domestic Birds*

FROM "THE SEASONS"

THE careful hen  
Calls all her chirping family around,  
Fed and defended by the fearless cock,  
Whose breast with ardor flames, as on he walks,  
Graceful, and crows defiance. In the pond  
The finely checkered duck before her train  
Rows garrulous. The stately-sailing swan  
Gives out her snowy plumage to the gale;  
And arching proud his neck, with oary feet  
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier-isle  
Protective of his young. The turkey nigh,  
Loud-threatening reddens, while the peacock spreads  
His every-colored glory to the sun,  
And swims in radiant majesty along.  
O'er the whole homely scene, the cooing dove  
Flies thick in amorous chase, and wanton rolls  
The glancing eye, and turns the changeful neck.

JAMES THOMSON

*From "The Castle of Indolence"*

*Here, for once, Thomson rises to the rich color and poetic luxury found so frequently in "The Faerie Queene" of Spenser.*

A PLEASING land of drowsy-head it was,  
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;  
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
For ever flushing round a summer sky.  
There eke the soft delights that witchingly  
Distil a wanton sweetness through the breast,  
And the calm pleasures, always hovered nigh;  
But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest  
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest. . . .

Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold!  
See all but man with unearned pleasure gay:  
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,  
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May!  
What youthful bride can equal her array?  
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?  
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,  
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,  
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky. . . .

Come, ye who still the cumbrous load of life  
Push hard up hill; but as the furthest steep  
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,  
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,  
And hurls your labors to the valleys deep,  
For ever vain; come, and, withouten fee,  
I, in oblivion will your sorrows steep,  
Your cares, your toils, will steep you in a sea  
Of full delight: Oh come, ye weary wights, to me!

"He was a poet himself, and a  
good poet." Chubb

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

ENGLAND, 1709-1784

THE GREAT CHAM OF LITERATURE," as Smollett called Dr. Johnson, wrote comparatively little verse—all of it scholarly and some of it of a fairly high order. We cannot afford to overlook the beautiful epitaph on his friend Levett, and the magnificent statement of his religious tribulations, in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. Courthope suggests that "Johnson unites in his own style many of the opposite excellences exhibited by his predecessor Pope and his friend Goldsmith." *Rasselas*, his noble poetic performance in prose, was written under great pressure to defray his mother's funeral expenses. His celebrated *Lives of the Poets* remains an authoritative and monumental work of its kind, although the complaint has been made that the author "left out the poets."

### *One-and-Twenty*

LONG-EXPECTED One-and-Twenty,  
Lingering year at length is flown:  
Pride and pleasure, pomp and plenty,  
Great Sir John,<sup>1</sup> are now your own.

Loosened from the minor's tether,  
Free to mortgage or to sell,  
Wild as wind and light as feather,  
Bid the sons of thrift farewell.

Call the Betsies, Kates and Jennies,  
All the names that banish care;  
Lavish of your grandsire's guineas,  
Show the spirit of an heir.

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Lade.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

All that prey on vice and folly  
Joy to see their quarry fly:  
There's the gamester, light and jolly,  
There's the lender, grave and sly.

Wealth, my lad, was made to wander,  
Let it wander as it will;  
Call the jockey, call the pander,  
Bid them come and take their fill.

When the bonny blade carouses,  
Pockets full and spirits high—  
What are acres? what are houses?  
Only dirt, or wet or dry.

Should the guardian friend or mother  
Tell the woes of wilful waste,  
Scorn their counsel, scorn their pother;  
You can hang or drown at last!

## *Charles XII*

ON what foundation stands the warrior's pride,  
How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide.  
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,  
No dangers fright him, and no labors tire;  
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,  
Unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain.  
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield;  
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field.  
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,  
And one capitulate, and one resign:



## SAMUEL JOHNSON

Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain:  
"Think nothing gained," he cries, "till naught remain,  
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,  
And all be mine beneath the polar sky."

### *Shakespeare and Jonson*

WHEN Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous  
foes  
First reared the Stage, immortal Shakespeare rose:  
Each change of many-colored life he drew,  
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:  
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,  
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.  
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impressed,  
And unresisted passion stormed the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,  
To please in method, and invent by rule:  
His studious patience and laborious art,  
By regular approach assayed the heart.  
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays,  
For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise.  
A mortal born, he met the general doom,  
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

### *On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, a Practiser in Physic*

CONDEMNED to Hope's delusive mine,  
As on we toil from day to day,  
By sudden blasts or slow decline  
Our social comforts drop away.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

Well tried through many a varying year,  
See Levet to the grave descend,  
Officious, innocent, sincere,  
Of every friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills affection's eye,  
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;  
Nor, lettered Arrogance, deny  
Thy praise to merit unrefined.

When fainting nature called for aid,  
And hovering death prepared the blow,  
His vigorous remedy displayed  
The power of art without the show.

In Misery's darkest cavern known,  
His useful care was ever nigh,  
Where hopeless Anguish poured his groan,  
And lonely Want retired to die.

No summons mocked by chill delay,  
No petty gain disdained by pride;  
The modest wants of every day  
The toil of every day supplied.

His virtues walked their narrow round,  
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;  
And sure the Eternal Master found  
The single talent well employed.

The busy day, the peaceful night,  
Unfelt, uncounted, glided by:  
His frame was firm—his powers were bright,  
Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,  
No cold gradations of decay,  
Death broke at once the vital chain,  
And freed his soul the nearest way.

RICHARD JAGO

ENGLAND, 1715-1781

*Absence*

WITH leaden foot Time creeps along  
While Delia is away:  
With her, nor plaintive was the song,  
Nor tedious was the day.

Ah, envious Power! reverse my doom;  
Now double thy career,  
Strain every nerve, stretch every plume,  
And rest them when she's here!

## THOMAS GRAY

ENGLAND, 1716-1771

GRAY was perhaps the most learned man of his time in Europe—a far more industrious reader than writer. His *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, Walter Savage Landor predicted, “will be read as long as any work of Shakespeare, despite of its moping owl and the tinkettle of an epitaph tied to its tail.” Gray himself believed that the universal popularity of his great *Elegy* was due entirely to the subject and that “the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose.” Gray also maintained that the *Elegy* was not his best work in poetry, placing above it his odes. Nevertheless, the *Elegy* remains the masterpiece of the *Il Penseroso* school, and has summed up for all English readers, for all time, the poetry of the tomb.

By comparing the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* with *The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and *The Bard*, one can form an opinion as to whether Gray was a fair appraiser of his own work.

### *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

*For more than a century this elegy has kept its place as a masterpiece of English verse. It has the threefold charm of exquisite diction, musical versification, and homely human—sometimes exalted—sentiment. In consenting to its publication the author wrote to Dodsley, the publisher, in 1751: “Print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them.” Accordingly, in the early editions it was printed, not in separated, but in continuous stanzas.*

## THOMAS GRAY

*The night before the Battle of Quebec (1759), in which the British, under General James Wolfe, defeated the French under Montcalm, the British commander read this poem aloud to some of his officers, and announced in conclusion: "Gentlemen, I would rather have written those lines than to capture Quebec tomorrow."*

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
The moping owl does to the moon complain  
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,  
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

## THOMAS GRAY

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;  
How jocund did they drive their team afield!  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour:  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault  
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire—  
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;  
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

## THOMAS GRAY

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,  
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
And read their history in a nation's eyes—

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone  
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined—  
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray:  
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

THOMAS GRAY

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply;  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires:  
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,  
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
"Oft have we seen him at the deep of dawn  
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the door of yonder nodding beech  
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,  
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,  
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.



## THOMAS GRAY

"One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,  
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

"The next with dirges due in sad array  
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.  
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay  
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

### THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth  
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.  
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,  
And Melancholy marked him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:  
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,  
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a  
friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)  
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

THOMAS GRAY

*The Curse Upon Edward*

WEAVE the warp, and weave the woof,  
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.  
Give ample room and verge enough  
The characters of Hell to trace.  
Mark the year, and mark the night,  
When Severn shall re-echo with affright  
The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roofs that ring,  
Shrieks of an agonizing King!  
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,  
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,  
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs  
The scourge of Heaven. What terrors round him wait!  
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,  
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

Mighty Victor, mighty Lord!  
Low on his funeral couch he lies!  
No pitying heart, no eye, afford  
A tear to grace his obsequies.  
Is the sable warrior fled?  
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.  
The swarm that in thy noon-tide beam were born?  
Gone to salute the rising morn.  
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,  
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm  
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;  
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;  
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,  
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

Fill high the sparkling bowl,  
The rich repast prepare;

## THOMAS GRAY

Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:  
Close by the regal chair  
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl  
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.  
Heard ye the din of battle bray,  
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?  
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,  
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.  
Ye Towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,  
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,  
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,  
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.  
Above, below, the rose of snow,  
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:  
The bristled boar in infant-gore  
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.  
Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursèd loom  
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.  
Edward, lo! to sudden fate  
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun)  
Half of thy heart we consecrate.  
(The web is wove. The work is done.)

### *From "The Progress of Poesy"*

#### A PINDARIC ODE

WOODS that wave o'er Delphi's steep,  
Isles that crown the Ægean deep,  
Fields that cool Ilissus laves,  
Or where Mæander's amber waves  
In lingering labyrinths creep,  
How do your tuneful echoes languish,  
Mute, but to the voice of anguish?

## THOMAS GRAY

Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breathed around:  
Every shade and hallowed fountain  
Murmured deep a solemn sound;  
'Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,  
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.  
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,  
And coward Vice that revels in her chains.  
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

Far from the sun and summer gale,  
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,  
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,  
To Him the mighty mother did unveil  
Her awful face: the dauntless child  
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.  
This pencil take (she said) whose colors clear  
Richly paint the vernal year:  
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!  
This can unlock the gates of joy;  
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,  
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

Nor second he, that rode sublime  
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,  
The secrets of the abyss to spy.  
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:  
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,  
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,  
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,  
Closed his eyes in endless night.  
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,  
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear

## THOMAS GRAY

Two coursers of ethereal race,  
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!  
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er  
Scatters from her pictured urn  
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.  
But ah! 'tis heard no more——  
O Lyre divine! what daring Spirit  
Wakes thee now? Though he inherit  
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,  
That the Theban eagle bear  
Sailing with supreme dominion  
Through the azure deep of air:  
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run  
Such forms as glitter in the Muses's ray,  
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun;  
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way  
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

### *From "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"*

AH, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade,  
Ah, fields beloved in vain,  
Where once my careless childhood strayed  
A stranger yet to pain!  
I feel the gales that from ye blow,  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring.

## THOMAS GRAY

While some, on earnest business bent,  
Their murmuring labors ply  
'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint  
To sweeten liberty:  
Some bold adventurers disdain  
The limits of their little reign,  
And unknown regions dare descry:  
Still as they run they look behind,  
They hear a voice in every wind,  
And snatch a fearful joy.

Alas, regardless of their doom  
The little victims play!  
No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor care beyond to-day;  
Yet see how all around them wait  
The ministers of human fate,  
And black Misfortune's baleful train!  
Ah, show them where in ambush stand  
To seize their prey the murtherous band!  
Ah, tell them, they are men!

To each his sufferings: all are men,  
Condemned alike to groan—  
The tender for another's pain;  
The unfeeling for his own.  
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate?  
Since sorrow never comes too late,  
And happiness too swiftly flies,  
Thought would destroy their paradise.  
No more; where ignorance is bliss,  
'Tis folly to be wise.

## WILLIAM COLLINS

ENGLAND, 1721-1759

As a purely lyric poet, William Collins, a contemporary of Thomas Gray, is immensely superior to the more famous author of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Hence Swinburne's epigram: "The Muse gave birth to Collins; she did but give suck to Gray."

I regard the *Ode to Evening* as one of the finest things of its kind in the language. Read and absorb it, partake of its medicinal property, and the approach of night will possess a grace and meaning that may be new to you. His justly admired *Ode to the Passions* has a more obvious appeal. To Swinburne, great poet himself, "Its grace and vigor, its vivid and pliant dexterity of touch, are worthy of all their long inheritance of praise; and altogether it holds out admirably well to the happy and harmonious end."

Poor, neglected, broken in body and mind, this noble poet died in an insane asylum.

Speaking of Collins and of Thomas Gray, G. H. Mair observes: "They mark a period; they are the first definite break with the classic convention which had been triumphant for upwards of seventy years when their prime came. It is a break, however, in style rather than in essentials, and a reader who seeks in them the inspiring freshness which came later with Wordsworth and Coleridge will be disappointed. . . . They are fastidious and academic; they lack the authentic fire."

WILLIAM COLLINS

*How Sleep the Brave*

HOW sleep the brave, who sink to rest  
By all their country's wishes blest!  
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,  
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,  
She there shall dress a sweeter sod  
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knells is rung;  
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;  
There Honor comes, a pilgrim grey,  
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;  
And Freedom shall awhile repair  
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

*Ode to Evening*

*This ode is memorable in the fact that it has no rhyme, and yet it has fine phrasal beauty and melodious charm. It is surpassed only by Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears," that most remarkable unrhymed lyric in the world.*

IF aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,  
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,  
Like thy own solemn springs,  
Thy springs and dying gales;

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun  
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,  
With brede ethereal wove,  
O'erhang his wavy bed:



WILLIAM COLLINS

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat  
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,  
Or where the beetle winds  
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path  
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:  
Now teach me, maid composed,  
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,  
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,  
As, musing slow, I hail  
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows  
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp  
The fragrant hours, and elves  
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows  
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier sun,  
The pensive pleasures sweet,  
Prepare thy shadowy car:

Then lead, calm votaress; where some sheety lake  
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,  
Or upland fallows grey  
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Or if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,  
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut  
That from the mountain's side  
Views wilds and swelling floods,

## WILLIAM COLLINS

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,  
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all  
    Thy dewy fingers draw  
    The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,  
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!  
    While Summer loves to sport  
    Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,  
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,  
    Affrights thy shrinking train,  
    And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,  
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,  
    Thy gentlest influence own,  
    And hymn thy favorite name!

### *Fidele's Dirge*

TO fair Fidele's grassy tomb  
    Soft maids and village hinds shall bring  
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,  
    And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear  
    To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;  
But shepherd lads assemble here,  
    And melting virgins own their love.

## WILLIAM COLLINS

No withered witch shall here be seen,  
No goblins lead their nightly crew:  
The female fays shall haunt the green,  
And dress thy grave with pearly dew;

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,  
Shall kindly lend his little aid,  
With hoary moss, and gathered flowers,  
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,  
In tempests shake the sylvan cell,  
Or midst the chase, on every plain,  
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,  
For thee the tear be duly shed;  
Beloved till life can charm no more,  
And mourned till Pity's self be dead.

### *The Passions*

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

WHEN Music, heavenly maid, was young,  
While yet in early Greece she sung,  
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,  
Thronged around her magic cell,  
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,  
Possest beyond the Muse's painting:  
By turns they felt the glowing mind  
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;  
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,  
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired,

## WILLIAM COLLINS

From the supporting myrtles round  
They snatched her instruments of sound;  
And, as they oft had heard apart  
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,  
Each (for madness ruled the hour)  
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear, his hand, its skill to try,  
Amid the chords bewildered laid,  
And back recoiled, he knew not why,  
Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rushed; his eyes on fire,  
In lightnings owned his secret stings:  
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,  
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair  
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;  
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;  
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,  
What was thy delightful measure?  
Still it whispered promised pleasure,  
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!  
Still would her touch the strain prolong;  
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,  
She called on Echo still, through all the song;  
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,  
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,  
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden  
hair.

## WILLIAM COLLINS

And longer had she sung—but, with a frown,  
Revenge impatient rose:  
He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder, down;  
And with a withering look,  
The war-denouncing trumpet took,  
And blew a blast so loud and dread,  
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe!  
And, ever and anon, he beat  
The doubling drum, with furious heat;  
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,  
Dejected Pity, at his side,  
Her soul-subduing voice applied,  
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,  
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting  
from his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught were fixed;  
Sad proof of thy distressful state;  
Of differing themes the veering song was mixed;  
And now it courted Love, now raving called  
on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,  
Pale Melancholy sat retired;  
And, from her wild sequestered seat,  
In notes by distance made more sweet,  
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul:  
And, dashing soft from rocks around,  
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;  
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure  
stole,  
Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,  
Round an holy calm diffusing,  
Love of peace, and lonely musing  
In hollow murmurs died away.

## WILLIAM COLLINS

But oh! how altered was its sprightlier tone,  
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,  
Her bow across her shoulder flung,  
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,  
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,  
The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known!  
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed  
queen,  
Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,  
Peeping from forth their alleys green:  
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;  
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:  
He, with viny crown advancing,  
First to the lively pipe his hand address;  
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,  
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best;  
They would have thought who heard the strain  
They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,  
Amidst the festal sounding shades,  
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,  
While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings,  
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round:  
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;  
And he, amidst his frolic play,  
As if he would the charming air repay,  
Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid,  
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid!  
Why, goddess! why, to us denied,  
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside  
As, in that loved Athenian bower,

WILLIAM COLLINS

You learned an all-commanding power,  
Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endeared,  
Can well recall what then it heard;  
Where is thy native simple heart,  
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?  
Arise, as in that elder time,  
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!  
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,  
Fill thy recording sister's page—  
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,  
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,  
Had more of strength, diviner rage,  
Than all which charms this laggard age;  
Even all at once together found,  
Cecilia's mingled world of sound—  
O bid our vain endeavors cease;  
Revive the just designs of Greece:  
Return in all thy simple state!  
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

*From "Ode on the Popular Superstitions  
of the Highlands"*

UNBOUNDED is thy range; with varied style  
Thy muse may, like those feathery tribes which  
spring

From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing  
Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,  
To that hoar pile which still its ruins shows:  
In whose small vaults a pigmy-folk is found,  
Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,  
And culls them, wondering, from the hallowed ground!  
Or thither where beneath the showery west

WILLIAM COLLINS

The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid;  
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest.  
No slaves revere them and no wars invade;  
Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,  
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,  
And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign power  
In pageant robes, and wreathed with sheeny gold,  
And on their twilight tombs aerial council hold.

MARK AKENSIDE

ENGLAND, 1721-1770

*The Virtuoso*

HE many a creature did anatomize,  
Almost unpeopling water, air and land;  
Beasts, fishes, birds, snails, caterpillars, flies,  
Were laid full low by his relentless hand,  
That oft with gory crimson was distained:  
He many a dog destroyed, and many a cat  
Of fleas his bed, of frogs the marshes drained,  
Could tellen if a mite were lean or fat,  
And read a lecture o'er the entrails of a gnat.



## CHRISTOPHER SMART

ENGLAND, 1722-1771

**G**IFTED with a powerful but disordered intellect, this eighteenth-century poet began his career as a London man of letters by publishing *Poems on Several Occasions*, which contained *The Hop Garden*. His mental aberration finally became acute; and during his confinement in an asylum he produced his *Song to David*, which contains a few notable stanzas. The poem, as a whole, is usually praised far beyond its merit. Unfortunate to the last, Smart died in a debtor's prison.

### *From "A Song to David"*

**T**ELL them, I AM, Jehovah said  
To Moses; while earth heard in dread,  
And, smitten to the heart,  
At once above, beneath, around,  
All Nature, without voice or sound,  
Replied, O LORD, THOU ART.

The world, the clustering spheres, He made;  
The glorious light, the soothing shade,  
Dale, champaign, grove and hill;  
The multitudinous abyss,  
Where Secrecy remains in bliss,  
And Wisdom hides her skill.

The pillars of the Lord are seven,  
Which stand from earth to topmost heaven:  
His Wisdom drew the plan:  
His Word accomplished the design,  
From brightest gem to deepest mine;  
From Christ enthroned, to Man. . . .

## CHRISTOPHER SMART

Sweet is the dew that falls betimes,  
And drops upon the leafy limes,  
    Sweet Hermon's fragrant air:  
Sweet is the lily's silver bell,  
And sweet the wakeful tapers' smell  
    That watch for early prayer.

Sweet the young nurse, with love intense,  
Which smiles o'er sleeping innocence;  
    Sweet, when the lost arrive:  
Sweet the musician's ardor beats,  
While his vague mind's in quest of sweets,  
    The choicest flowers to hive.

Strong is the horse upon his speed;  
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,  
    Which makes at once his game;  
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;  
Strong through the turbulent profound  
    Shoots Xiphias to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal  
His eyeball—like a bastion's mole  
    His chest against the foes:  
Strong the gier-eagle on his sail;  
Strong against tide the enormous whale  
    Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth and air,  
And in the sea, the man of prayer,  
    And far beneath the tide:  
And in the seat to fate assigned,  
Where ask is have, where seek is find,  
    Where knock is open wide.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

IRELAND, 1728-1774

NO better beloved poet than Oliver Goldsmith has ever used the English language. Of him, his great contemporary, Samuel Johnson, said, "No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had." Goldsmith was perhaps the most charming and versatile writer of the eighteenth century. In character, he was prodigal, but he lavished more on others than he did on himself. His benevolence was always prompt, sometimes whimsical.

It is in *The Deserted Village*, his best known poem, that Goldsmith most fully shows the grace and truthfulness with which he could touch natural scenes. Lissoy, an Irish village known to the poet in his youth, is said to have been the original from which he drew. In the poem, the mill, the brook, the hawthorn tree, the church that crowns the neighboring hill, are all taken straight from the outer world. The features of nature and the works of man, the parsonage, the school house, the ale house—all harmonize in one picture, and though the feeling evoked is one of melancholy, it is wonderfully varied and relieved by the faithfulness of the picture and the kindly humor of the artist. Second among his poems in point of excellence is *The Traveller*, which first brought Goldsmith recognition. His novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, still delights the reading world; and his comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, still holds the stage.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

*From "The Deserted Village"*

*Here we come upon what is perhaps the finest achievement in the realm of gnomic poetry—philosophy in verse. It surpasses the wisdom poetry of Pope in the fact that it is aglow with a sweeter humanity. In Goldsmith's verse, wisdom comes blowing a pipe with many heart-warm notes.*

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,  
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,  
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed.  
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!  
How often have I paused on every charm—  
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topped the neighboring hill,  
The hawthorn-bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!  
How often have I blessed the coming day,  
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labor free,  
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
The young contending as the old surveyed;  
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;  
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,  
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;  
The dancing pair, that simply sought renown  
By holding out, to tire each other down;

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

The swain, mistrustless of his smutted face,  
While secret laughter tittered round the place;  
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,  
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:  
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,  
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;  
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed;  
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintained its man:  
For him light labor spread her wholesome store—  
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;  
His best companions, innocence and health;  
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered: trade's unfeeling train  
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;  
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,  
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;  
And every want to luxury allied,  
And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
Those calm desires that asked but little room,  
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,  
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green—  
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;  
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,  
The mingling notes came softened from below;  
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,  
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
The playful children just let loose from school,  
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,  
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.  
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.  
But now the sounds of population fail;  
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale;  
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread—  
But all the bloomy blush of life is fled.  
All but one widowed, solitary thing,  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;  
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,  
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—  
She only left of all the harmless train,  
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,  
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild—  
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.  
A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;  
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor ever had changed, nor wished to change, his place;  
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power  
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Far other aims his heart had learned to prize—  
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.  
His house was known to all the vagrant train;  
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.  
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,  
Whose beard, descending, swept his aged breast;  
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;  
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,  
Sate by his fire, and talked the night away—  
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,  
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.  
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,  
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;  
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side;  
But in his duty prompt at every call,  
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;  
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place;  
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.  
The service past, around the pious man,  
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;  
Even children followed, with endearing wile,  
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed;  
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given—  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.  
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,  
The village master taught his little school.  
A man severe he was, and stern to view—  
I knew him well, and every truant knew;  
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace  
The day's disasters in his morning face;  
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee,  
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;  
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,  
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;  
Yet he was kind—or, if severe in aught,  
The love he bore to learning was in fault.  
The village all declared how much he knew,  
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
And even the story ran that he could gauge.  
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,  
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still;  
While words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;  
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew.  
But past is all his fame; the very spot  
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.



## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey  
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay!  
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
Between a splendid and a happy land.  
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,  
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;  
Hoards, even beyond the miser's wish, abound,  
And rich men flock from all the world around.  
Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name,  
That leaves our useful products still the same.  
Not so the loss: the man of wealth and pride  
Takes up a space that many poor supplied—  
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds—  
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;  
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth  
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;  
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,  
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;  
Around the world each needful product flies,  
For all the luxuries the world supplies;  
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,  
In barren splendor, feebly waits the fall.

Where, then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,  
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?  
If, to some common's fenceless limits strayed,  
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
And even the bare-worn common is denied.  
If to the city sped, what waits him there?  
To see profusion that he must not share;  
To see ten-thousand baneful arts combined  
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;  
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know  
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woes.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,  
There the pale artist plies his sickly trade;  
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.

And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade—  
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,  
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame!  
Dear, charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride!  
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe—  
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so!  
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel!  
Thou nurse of every virtue—fare thee well!

### *Elegy on Madam Blaize*

GOOD people all, with one accord,  
Lament for Madam Blaize;  
Who never wanted a good word—  
From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom passed her door,  
And always found her kind;  
She freely lent to all the poor—  
Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighborhood to please  
With manner wondrous winning;  
And never followed wicked ways—  
Unless when she was sinning.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

At church, in silks and satins new,  
With hoop of monstrous size,  
She never slumbered in her pew—  
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,  
By twenty beaux, and more;  
The king himself has followed her—  
When she has walked before.

But now, her wealth and finery fled,  
Her hangers-on cut short all,  
Her doctors found, when she was dead—  
Her last disorder mortal.

Let us lament, in sorrow sore;  
For Kent Street well may say,  
That, had she lived a twelvemonth more—  
She had not died to-day.

THOMAS PERCY

ENGLAND, 1729-1811

PERCY is best remembered by his great service to English literature in gathering and publishing, in 1765, his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, which did much to kindle interest in ancient British literature and to usher in the revival of Romanticism. This ballad is one of his notable adaptations.

*The Friar of Orders Gray*

IT was a friar of orders gray  
Walked forth to tell his beads;  
And he met with a lady fair  
Clad in a pilgrim's weeds.

"Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar;  
I pray thee tell to me,  
If ever at yon holy shrine  
My true-love thou didst see."

"And how should I know your true-love  
From many another one?"  
"O, by his cockle hat and staff,  
And by his sandal shoon.

"But chiefly by his face and mien,  
That were so fair to view;  
His flaxen locks that sweetly curled,  
And eyes of lovely blue."

THOMAS PERCY

"O lady, he is dead and gone!  
Lady, he's dead and gone!  
And at his head a green grass turf,  
And at his heels a stone.

"Within these holy cloisters long  
He languished, and he died,  
Lamenting of a lady's love,  
And 'plaining of her pride.

"Here bore him barefaced on his bier  
Six proper youths and tall;  
And many a tear bedewed his grave  
Within yon kirk-yard wall."

"And art thou dead, thou gentle youth?  
And art thou dead and gone?  
And didst thou die for love of me?  
Break, cruel heart of stone!"

"O weep not, lady, weep not so;  
Some ghostly comfort seek:  
Let not vain sorrow rive thy heart,  
Nor tears bedew thy cheek."

"O do not, do not, holy friar,  
My sorrow now reprove;  
For I have lost the sweetest youth  
That e'er won lady's love.

"And now, alas! for thy sad loss  
I'll evermore weep and sigh:  
For thee I only wished to live,  
For thee I wish to die."

THOMAS PERCY

"Weep no more, lady, weep no more,  
Thy sorrow is in vain;  
For violets plucked, the sweetest showers  
Will never make grow again.

"Our joys as wingèd dreams do fly;  
Why then should sorrow last?  
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,  
Grieve not for what is past."

"O say not so, thou holy friar:  
I pray thee, say not so;  
For since my true-love died for me,  
'Tis meet my tears should flow.

"And will he never come again?  
Will he never come again?  
Ah! no, he is dead and laid in his grave,  
Forever to remain.

"His cheek was redder than the rose;  
The comeliest youth was he!  
But he is dead and laid in his grave:  
Alas, and woe is me!"

"Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever:  
One foot on sea and one on land,  
To one thing constant never.<sup>1</sup>

"Hadst thou been fond, he had been false,  
And left thee sad and heavy;  
For young men ever were fickle found,  
Since summer trees were leafy."

<sup>1</sup> Lifted from *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II.

THOMAS PERCY

"Now say not so, thou holy friar,  
I pray thee say not so:  
My love he had the truest heart—  
O, he was ever true!

"And art thou dead, thou much-loved youth,  
And didst thou die for me?  
Then farewell home: forevermore  
A pilgrim I will be.

"But first upon my true-love's grave  
My weary limbs I'll lay;  
And thrice I'll kiss the green-grass turf  
That wraps his breathless clay."

"Yet stay, fair lady: rest awhile  
Beneath this cloister wall:  
See through the hawthorn blows the cold wind,  
And drizzly rain doth fall."

"O stay me not, thou holy friar,  
O stay me not, I pray:  
No drizzly rain that falls on me  
Can wash my fault away."

"Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,  
And dry those pearly tears;  
For see, beneath this gown of gray  
Thy own true-love appears.

"Here forced by grief and hopeless love,  
These holy weeds I sought;  
And here, amid these lonely walls,  
To end my days I thought.

## THOMAS PERCY

"But haply, for my year of grace  
Is not yet passed away,  
Might I still hope to win thy love,  
No longer would I stay."

"Now farewell grief, and welcome joy  
Once more unto my heart;  
For since I have found thee, lovely youth,  
We nevermore will part."

## WILLIAM COWPER

ENGLAND, 1731-1800

TEN years after Cowper produced his masterpiece, Robert Burns wrote to a friend: "Is not *The Task* a glorious poem? Its religion, barring a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature; the religion that exalts and ennobles man." About the same time Charles Lamb wrote: "I have been reading *The Task* with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton; but I could not call that man my friend who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.'" Greatly as the poem has been admired in the past, it is likely to prove tedious to the modern reader. Yet it gave beautiful and effective expression to the sentiments of a large religious party.

One Lady Austin is said to have been the inspiration of this notable poem. She had often urged Cowper to try his powers in blank verse: at last he promised to do so, if she would give him a subject. "Oh," she replied, "you can never be in want of a subject; you can write upon any. Write upon this sofa." Acting upon the suggestion, the poet produced his masterpiece.



WILLIAM COWPER

From "On the Receipt of My Mother's  
Picture"

*These lines are full of pathos, and the poet's history confirms all the personal allusions to his own unhappiness. His mind, even in childhood, exhibited that gentleness and diffidence which ripened into such bitter fruit in his after life. Insanity developed, taking the form of religious melancholy.*

O H that those lips had language! Life has passed  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;  
Voice only fails—else how distinct they say  
"Grieve not, my child—chase all thy fears away!"  
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes—  
(Blest be the art that can immortalize:  
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it!)—here shines on me still the same,

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear!  
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!  
Who bidd'st me honor with an artless song,  
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.  
I will obey—not willingly alone,  
But gladly, as the precept were her own;  
And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—  
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie:  
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son—  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?

## WILLIAM COWPER

Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell toll on thy burial-day;  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;  
And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown;  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more.  
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return;  
What ardently I wished, I long believed,  
And, disappointed still, was still deceived—  
By expectation every day beguiled,  
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,  
I learned at last submission to my lot;  
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers—  
The violet, the pink, the jessamine—  
I pricked them into paper with a pin,  
(And thou wast happier than myself the while—  
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)  
Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?  
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.  
But no—what here we call our life is such,  
So little to be loved, and thou so much,

## WILLIAM COWPER

That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
The son of parents passed into the skies.  
And now, farewell!—Time, unrevoked, has run  
His wonted course; yet what I wished is done.  
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again—  
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,  
Without the sin of violating thine:  
And while the wings of fancy still are free,  
And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
Time has but half succeeded in his theft,  
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

### *The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk*

*In 1704, Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, who was sailing-master of an English privateer, was—in consequence of a quarrel with the captain—put ashore, at his own request, on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, which lies about four-hundred miles off the coast of Chili. He was well supplied with clothing, implements and arms, and he remained on the island in solitude over four years, when he was taken off by an English vessel. His story is supposed to have suggested the romance of "Robinson Crusoe."*

I AM monarch of all I survey:  
My right there is none to dispute:  
From the centre all round to the sea,  
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.  
O Solitude! where are the charms  
That sages have seen in thy face?

## WILLIAM COWPER

Better dwell in the midst of alarms  
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach;  
I must finish my journey alone;  
Never hear the sweet music of speech;  
I start at the sound of my own.  
The beasts that roam over the plain  
My form with indifference see:  
They are so unacquainted with man,  
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship and love,  
Divinely bestowed upon man,  
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,  
How soon would I taste you again!  
My sorrows I then might assuage  
In the ways of religion and truth—  
Might learn from the wisdom of age,  
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold  
Resides in that heavenly word!  
More precious than silver and gold,  
Or all that this earth can afford.  
But the sound of the church-going bell  
These valleys and rocks never heard,  
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,  
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport  
Convey to this desolate shore  
Some cordial, endearing report  
Of a land I shall visit no more:

WILLIAM COWPER

My friends, do they now and then send  
A wish or a thought after me?  
Oh, tell me I yet have a friend,  
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!  
Compared with the speed of its flight,  
The tempest itself lags behind,  
And the swift-wingéd arrows of light.  
When I think of my own native land,  
In a moment I seem to be there;  
But, alas! recollection at hand  
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,  
The beast is laid down in his lair.  
Even here is a season of rest,  
And I to my cabin repair.  
There's mercy in every place;  
And mercy (encouraging thought!)  
Gives even affliction a grace,  
And reconciles man to his lot.

*From "Conversation"*

THOUGH Nature weigh our talents, and dispense  
To every man his modicum of sense,  
And conversation, in its better part,  
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art;  
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,  
On culture and the sowing of the soil.  
Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,  
But talking is not always to converse;

WILLIAM COWPER

Not more distinct from harmony divine,  
The constant creaking of a country sign.

Ye powers, who rule the tongue—if such there are—  
And make colloquial happiness your care,  
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,  
A duel in the form of a debate.  
Vociferated logic kills me quite;  
A noisy man is always in the right;  
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,  
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,  
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,  
Reply discreetly; "To be sure, no doubt!"

Dubius is such a scrupulous, good man;  
Yes, you may catch him tripping if you can.  
He would not, with a peremptory tone,  
Assert the nose upon his face his own:  
With hesitation admirably slow,  
He humbly *hopes, presumes, it may be so.*  
His evidence, if he were called by law  
To swear to some enormity he saw,  
For want of prominence and just relief,  
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.  
Through constant dread of giving truth offense,  
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;  
Knows what he knows as if he knew it not;  
What he remembers seems to have forgot;  
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,  
Centering, at last, in having none at all.

A story, in which native humor reigns,  
Is often useful, always entertains:  
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,  
May furnish illustration, well applied;

## WILLIAM COWPER

But sedentary weavers of long tales  
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.  
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,  
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,  
And echo conversations, dull and dry,  
Embellished with, "He said," and "So said I."  
At every interview their route the same,  
The repetition makes attention lame:  
We bustle up, with unsuccessful speed,  
And, in the saddest part, cry, "Droll indeed!"

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain  
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,  
And bear the marks, upon a blushing face,  
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.  
Our sensibilities are so acute,  
The fear of being silent makes us mute.  
True modesty is a discerning grace,  
And only blushes in the proper place;  
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks, through fear,  
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t' appear;  
Humility the parent of the first,  
The last by vanity produced and nursed.

The circle formed, we sit in silent state,  
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;  
"Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," uttered softly, show,  
Every five minutes, how the minutes go:  
Each individual, suffering a constraint  
Poetry may, but colors cannot paint,  
As if in close committee on the sky,  
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry,  
And finds a changing clime a happy source  
Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.  
We next inquire, but softly, and by stealth,

WILLIAM COWPER

Like conservators of the public health,  
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,  
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisics, and catarrh.  
That theme exhausted, a wide gap ensues,  
Filled up, at last, with interesting news.

And now, let no man charge me that I mean  
To clothe in sable every social scene;  
To find a medium asks some share of wit,  
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.

*Heedless Cruelty*

FROM "THE TACK"

I WOULD not enter on my list of friends  
(Though graced with polished manners and  
fine sense,  
Yet wanting sensibility) the man  
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.  
An inadvertent step may crush the snail  
That crawls at evening in the public path;  
But he that has humanity, forewarned,  
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.  
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,  
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,  
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes  
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,  
The chamber, or refectory, may die:  
A necessary act incurs no blame.  
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,  
And guiltless of offense, they range the air,  
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:



## WILLIAM COWPER

There they are privileged; and he that hunts  
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,  
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,  
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode.  
The sum is this: If man's convenience, health,  
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims  
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.  
Else they are all—the meanest things that are—  
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,  
As God was free to form them at the first,  
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.  
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons  
To love it too.

### *Boadicea*

WHEN the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
Sought, with an indignant mien,  
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;  
Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage and full of grief:

“Princess! if our aged eyes  
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
'Tis because resentment ties  
All the terrors of our tongues.

WILLIAM COWPER

"Rome shall perish—write that word  
In the blood that she has spilt—  
Perish, hopeless and abhorred,  
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renowned,  
Tramples on a thousand States;  
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—  
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

"Other Romans shall arise,  
Heedless of a soldier's name;  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,  
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway,  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,  
Pregnant with celestial fire,  
Bending as he swept the chords  
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,  
Felt them in her bosom glow,  
Rushed to battle, fought and died—  
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

## WILLIAM COWPER

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
Heaven awards the vengeance due;  
Empire is on us bestowed,  
Shame and ruin wait for you!

## JAMES MACPHERSON

SCOTLAND, 1736-1796

**M**ACPHERSON is the alleged translator of the *Poems of Ossian*. Some of his fragments of Gaelic verse were published in 1760, and they excited such keen interest that he was sent to the Highlands to discover more. Out of this exploration sprang the poems—*Fingal* and *Temora*, claimed by Macpherson to be translations. Immediately there was loud debate as to the genuineness of their Gaelic origin. The dispute has not yet been settled, although the weight of opinion is against Macpherson.

### *From "Poems of Ossian"*

**A**S the dark shades of autumn fly over hills of grass;  
so gloomy, dark, successive, came the chiefs of  
Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven,  
moved stately before them the King. His shining shield  
is on his side, like a flame on the heath at night, when  
the world is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some  
ghost sporting in his beam! Dimly gleam the hills  
around, and show indistinctly their oaks! A blast from  
the troubled ocean removed the settled mist. The sons  
of Erin appear like a ridge of rocks on the coast, when  
mariners on shores unknown are trembling at veering  
winds!

\* \* \* \* \*

## JAMES MACPHERSON

As a hundred winds on Morven, as the stream of  
a hundred hills, as clouds fly successive over heaven, as  
the dark ocean assails the shore of the desert; so  
roaring, so vast, so terrible, the armies mixed on Lena's  
echoing heath. The groan of the people spread over the  
hills; it was like the thunder of night, when the clouds  
burst on Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on  
the hollow wind.

\* \* \* \* \*

The waves crowd away. They crowd away for fear.  
They hear the sound of thy coming forth, O sun!  
Terrible is thy beauty, son of heaven, when death is  
descending on thy locks, when thou rollest thy vapors  
before thee over the blasted host. But pleasant is thy  
beam to the hunter, sitting by the rock in a storm, when  
thou shewest thyself from the parted cloud, and  
brightenest his dewy locks: he looks down on the streamy  
vale and beholds the descent of roes! How long shalt  
thou rise on war, and roll, a bloody shield, through  
heaven? I see the deaths of heroes, dark-wandering  
over thy face!

## JOHN WOLCOT

ENGLAND, 1738-1819

THIS poet, better known under the pseudonym of Peter  
Pindar, was a writer of such audacious satires on  
all sorts of personages, ranging from George III, Pitt and  
Boswell down the social scale, that the British Government  
sought to silence him with a liberal pension. It was de-  
clined. Wolcot was a master of burlesque and caricature.

JOHN WOLCOT

*The Razor-Seller*

A FELLOW in a market town,  
Most musical, cried "Razors!" up and down,  
And offered twelve for eighteen pence;  
Which certainly seemed wondrous cheap,  
And, for the money, quite a heap,  
As every man should buy, with cash and sense.

A country bumpkin the great offer heard—  
Poor Hodge, who suffered by a thick black beard,  
That seemed a shoe-brush stuck beneath his nose:  
With cheerfulness the eighteen pence he paid,  
And proudly to himself in whispers said,  
"This rascal stole the razors, I suppose!

"No matter if the fellow be a knave,  
Provided that the razors shave;  
It *sartinly* will be a monstrous prize."  
So home the clown, with his good fortune, went  
Smiling, in heart and soul content,  
And quickly soaped himself to ears and eyes.

Being well lathered from a dish or tub,  
Hodge now began with grinning pain to grub,  
Just like a hedger cutting furze;  
'Twas a vile razor!—then the rest he tried—  
All were impostors. "Ah!" Hodge sighed,  
"I wish my eighteen pence were in my purse."

In vain, to chase his beard, and bring the graces,  
He cut, and dug, and winced, and stamped, and swore;  
Brought blood, and danced, blasphemed, and made wry  
faces,  
And cursed each razor's body o'er and o'er:

## JOHN WOLCOT

His muzzle, formed of opposition stuff,  
Firm as a Foxite, would not lose its ruff;  
    So kept it—laughing at the steel and suds.  
Hodge, in a passion, stretched his angry jaws,  
Vowing the direst vengeance, with clenched claws,  
    On the vile cheat that sold the goods.  
“Razors! a base, confounded dog!  
Not fit to scrape a hog!”

Hodge sought the fellow—found him—and begun:  
“P’rhaps, Master Razor-rogue, to you ’tis fun  
    That people flay themselves out of their lives.  
You rascal! for an hour have I been grubbing  
Giving my whiskers here a scrubbing,  
    With razors just like oyster-knives.  
Sirrah! I tell you you’re a knave,  
To cry up razors that can’t shave!”

“Friend,” quoth the razor-man, “I’m not a knave;  
    As for the razors you have bought,  
    Upon my soul, I never thought  
That they would shave.”  
“Not think they’d *shave!*” quoth Hodge, with wonder-  
    ing eyes,  
And voice not much unlike an Indian yell;  
“What were they made for, then, you dog?” he cries.  
“*Made,*” quoth the fellow, with a smile—“*to sell.*”

## ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

ENGLAND, 1743-1825

L EIGH HUNT records that the great English statesman-orator, Charles James Fox, was so impressed with the poetry of Anna Letitia Barbauld that "he had got her songs by heart," and that "this was an applause worth having."

### *Life*

L IFE! I know not what thou art,  
But know that thou and I must part;  
And when, or how, or where we met,  
I own to me's a secret yet.  
But this I know, when thou art fled,  
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,  
No clod so valueless shall be  
As all that then remains of me.

O whither, whither dost thou fly?  
Where bend unseen thy trackless course?  
And in this strange divorce,  
Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?  
To the vast ocean of empyreal flame  
From whence thy essence came  
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed  
From matter's base encumbering weed?  
Or dost thou, hid from sight,  
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,  
Through blank oblivious years the appointed hour  
To break thy trance and reassume thy power?  
Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?  
O say, what art thou, when no more thou'rt thee?

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

Life! we have been long together,  
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;  
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;  
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;—  
Then steal away, give little warning,  
Choose thine own time;  
Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime  
Bid me Good-morning!

*From "A Summer Evening's Meditation"*

*Now and then, in this poem, the poet rises toward the high level of Milton. The two concluding lines are sublime.*

'TIS past! the sultry tyrant of the south  
Has spent his short-lived rage: more grate-  
ful hours  
Move silent on: the skies no more repel  
The dazzled sight, but, with mild maiden beams  
Of tempered light, invite the cherished eve  
To wander o'er their sphere; where hung aloft  
Dian's bright crescent, "like a silver bow  
New strung in heaven," lifts high its beamy horns,  
Impatient for the night, and seems to push  
Her brother down the sky. Fair Venus shines,  
Even in the eye of day; with sweetest beam  
Propitious shines, and shakes a trembling flood  
Of softened radiance from her dewy locks.  
The shadows spread apace; while meekened Eve,  
Her cheek yet warm with blushes, slow retires  
Through the Hesperian gardens of the west,  
And shuts the gates of day. 'Tis now the hour



ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts,  
The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth  
Of unpierced woods, where wrapt in solid shade  
She mused away the gaudy hours of noon,  
And, fed on thoughts unripened by the sun,  
Moves forward; and with radiant finger points  
To yon blue concave swelled by breath divine,  
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven  
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether  
One boundless blaze; ten thousand trembling fires,  
And dancing lustres, where the unsteady eye,  
Restless and dazzled, wanders unconfined  
O'er all this field of glories: spacious field,  
And worthy of the master: he whose hand,  
With hieroglyphics elder than the Nile,  
Inscribed the mystic tablet; hung on high  
To public gaze, and said, "Adore, O man,  
The finger of thy God!" From what pure wells  
Of milky light, what soft o'erflowing urn,  
Are all these lamps so filled? these friendly lamps  
For ever streaming o'er the azure deep  
To point our path, and light us to our home.  
How soft they slide along their lucid spheres!  
And, silent as the foot of time, fulfil  
Their destined course! Nature's self is hushed,  
And, but a scattered leaf, which rustles through  
The thick-wove foliage, not a sound is heard  
To break the midnight air; though the raised ear,  
Intensely listening, drinks in every breath.  
How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise!  
But are they silent all? or is there not  
A tongue in every star that talks with man,  
And woos him to be wise? nor woos in vain:  
THIS DEAD OF MIDNIGHT IS THE NOON OF THOUGHT,  
AND WISDOM MOUNTS HER ZENITH WITH THE STARS.

SIR WILLIAM JONES

ENGLAND, 1746-1794

*The Baby*

ON parent knees, a naked new-born child,  
Weeping thou sat'st when all around thee  
smiled:  
So live, that, sinking to thy last long sleep,  
Thou then mayst smile while all around thee weep.

*What Constitutes a State?*

WHAT constitutes a State?  
Not high-raised battlement or labored mound,  
Thick wall or moated gate—  
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned—  
Not bays and broad-armed ports,  
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride—  
Not starred and spangled courts,  
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.  
No; men, high-minded men,  
With powers as far above dull brutes endued  
In forest, brake or den,  
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude;  
Men who their duties know,  
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain,  
Prevent the long-aimed blow,  
And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain—  
These constitute a State:

SIR WILLIAM JONES

And sovereign Law, that State's collected will,  
O'er thrones and globes elate  
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.  
Smit by her sacred frown,  
The fiend, Dissension, like a vapor sinks;  
And even the all-dazzling crown  
Hides his faint rays, and at her bidding shrinks.  
Such was this heaven-loved isle,  
Than Lesbos fairer, and the Cretan shore!  
No more shall freedom smile?  
Shall Britons languish, and be men no more?  
Since all must life resign,  
Those sweet rewards which decorate the brave  
'Tis folly to decline,  
And steal inglorious to the silent grave.

JOHN LOGAN  
SCOTLAND, 1748-1788

*To the Cuckoo*

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove!  
Thou messenger of Spring!  
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,  
And woods thy welcome ring.

What time the daisy decks the green,  
Thy certain voice we hear:  
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,  
Or mark the rolling year?

JOHN LOGAN

Delightful visitant! with thee  
I hail the time of flowers  
And hear the sound of music sweet  
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy, wandering through the wood  
To pull the primrose gay,  
Starts, the new voice of Spring to hear,  
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,  
Thou flyest thy vocal vale,  
An annual guest in other lands,  
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,  
Thy sky is ever clear;  
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,  
No Winter in thy year!

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!  
We'd make, with joyful wing,  
Our annual visit o'er the globe,  
Companions of the Spring.

LADY ANNE LINDSAY

SCOTLAND, 1750-1825

*Auld Robin Gray*

*Leigh Hunt calls this "the most pathetic ballad ever written." According to our modern ideas, Jennie drew down her sorrows upon herself.*

WHEN the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye at  
hame,  
And a' the wald to rest are gane,  
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,  
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride;  
But saving a croun he had naething else beside:  
To make the croun a pund, young Jamie gaed to sea;  
And the croun and the pund were baith for me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,  
When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stown  
awa';  
My mother she fell sick,—and my Jamie at the sea—  
And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna  
spin;  
I toiled day and night, but their bread I couldna win;  
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his  
e'e  
Said, "Jennie, for their sakes, O, marry me!"

## LADY ANNE LINDSAY

My heart it said nay: I looked for Jamie back,  
But the wind it blew high and the ship it was a wrack.  
His ship it was a wrack—Why didna Jamie dee?  
Or why do I live to cry, "Wae's me!"

My father urged me sair: my mother didna speak,  
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to  
break.  
They gi'ed him my hand, though my heart was in the  
sea;  
Sae auld Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,  
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,  
I saw my Jamie's wraith—for I couldna think it he,  
Till he said, "I'm come hame to marry thee."

O sair, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say:  
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away.  
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;  
And why was I born to say, "Wae's me!"

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin:  
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin.  
But I'll do my best a gude wife aye to be,  
For auld Robin Gray he is kind unto me.

## THOMAS CHATTERTON

ENGLAND, 1752-1770

THIS poet, who died at eighteen, has long been acclaimed a prodigy of genius. Thomas Warton, an eighteenth century critic, was of the enthusiastic opinion that young Chatterton "would have proved the first of English poets, had he reached a maturer age." In his sonnet on *Resolution and Independence*, Wordsworth sings:

"I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,  
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride,"

referring to a habit the youth had of turning night into day and to the fact that he was pushed to suicide by starvation because he would not accept charity. Another and greater English critic, William Hazlitt, "cannot find in Chatterton's works anything so extraordinary as the age at which they were written. They have a facility, vigor and knowledge which were prodigious in a boy of sixteen, but which would not have been so in a man of twenty. Nor do I believe he would have written better had he lived. . . . He had done his best; and, like another Empedocles, threw himself into Etna, to ensure immortality." Here are specimens of his work, notably of the celebrated Rowley poems written by Chatterton, but attributed by him to a mythical Thomas Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century.

You should not fail to read the fine sonnet on Chatterton by Dante Rossetti—to be found on a later page.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

*The Minstrel's Roundelay*

FROM "ÆLLA"

*The fine madness that was in Chatterton (it attracted the notice of William Blake) is seen in its noblest frenzy in this remarkable song.*

O SING unto my roundelay,  
O drop the briny tear with me;  
Dance no more at holyday,  
Like a running river be:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

Black his cryne<sup>1</sup> as the winter night,  
White his rode<sup>2</sup> as the summer snow,  
Red his face as the morning light,  
Cold he lies in the grave below:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note,  
Quick in dance as thought can be,  
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout;  
O he lies by the willow-tree!  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

Hark! the raven flaps his wing  
In the briered dell below;

<sup>1</sup> cryne] hair.

<sup>2</sup> rode] complexion.



## THOMAS CHATTERTON

Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing  
To the nightmares, as they go:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

See! the white moon shines on high;  
Whiter is my true-love's shroud:  
Whiter than the morning sky,  
Whiter than the evening cloud:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

Here upon my true-love's grave  
Shall the barren flowers be laid;  
Not one holy saint to save  
All the coldness of a maid:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

With my hands I'll dent<sup>1</sup> the briers  
Round his holy corse to gre:<sup>2</sup>  
Ouph<sup>3</sup> and fairy, light your fires,  
Here my body still shall be:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn,  
Drain my heart's blood away;

<sup>1</sup> dent] fasten.

<sup>2</sup> gre] grow.

<sup>3</sup> ouph] elf.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Life and all its good I scorn,  
Dance by night, or feast by day:  
    My love is dead,  
    Gone to his death-bed  
All under the willow-tree.

*An Excellent Ballad of Charity*

**I**N Virginë the sultry Sun 'gan sheene  
And hot upon the meads did cast his ray:  
The apple ruddied from its paly green,  
And the soft pear did bend the leafy spray;  
The pied chelándry<sup>1</sup> sang the livelong day:  
'Twas now the pride, the manhood of the year,  
And eke the ground was dight in its most deft aumere.<sup>2</sup>

The sun was gleaming in the mid of day,  
Dead still the air and eke the welkin blue,  
When from the sea arist in drear array  
A heap of clouds of sable sullen hue,  
The which full fast unto the woodland drew,  
Hiding at once the Sunnè's festive face;  
And the black tempest swelled and gathered up apace.

Beneath an holm, fast by a pathway side  
Which did unto Saint Godwyn's convent lead,  
A hapless pilgrim moaning did abide,  
Poor in his view, ungentle in his weed,  
Long breast-full of the miseries of need.  
Where from the hailstorm could the beggar fly?  
He had no housen there, nor any convent nigh.

<sup>1</sup> Goldfinch.

<sup>2</sup> Used by Chatterton as 'mantle.'

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Look in his gloomèd face; his sprite there scan,  
How woe-begone, how withered, sapless, dead!  
Haste to thy church-glebe-house, accursèd man,  
Haste to thy coffin, thy sole slumbering-bed<sup>1</sup>!  
Cold as the clay which will grow on thy head  
Are Charity and Love among high elves;  
The Knights and Barons live for pleasure and them-  
selves

The gathered storm is ripe; the big drops fall;  
The sunburnt meadows smoke and drink the rain;  
The coming ghastness doth the cattle appal,  
And the full flocks are driving o'er the plain;  
Dashed from the clouds, the waters gush<sup>2</sup> again;  
The welkin opes, the yellow levin flies,  
And the hot fiery stream in the wide flame-lowe<sup>3</sup> dies.

List! now the thunder's rattling clamoring<sup>4</sup> sound  
Moves slowly on, and then upswollen clangs,  
Shakes the high spire, and lost, dispended, drowned,  
Still on the affrighted ear of terror hangs;  
The winds are up; the lofty elm-tree swangs;  
Again the levin and the thunder pours,  
And the full clouds are burst at once in stormy showers.

Spurring his palfrey o'er the watery plain,  
The Abbot of Saint Godwyn's convent came;  
His chapournette was drenchèd with the rain,

<sup>1</sup> 'Dortoure bedde. *Dourtoure*, a sleeping room.—*Chatterton*.

<sup>2</sup> Here Chatterton's text-word is 'flott,' and his gloss 'fly,' 'Gush' seems more appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> 'lowings'—flames—*Chatterton*.

<sup>4</sup> 'Clymmynge,' noisy.—*Chatterton*. 'Clamouring' is adopted as nearer in sound to his text-word.

## THOMAS CHATTERTON

His painted girdle met with mickle shame;  
He backwards<sup>1</sup> told his bederoll at the same.  
The storm increased, and he drew aside,  
With the poor alms-craver near to the holm to bide.

His cope was all of Lincoln cloth so fine,  
With a gold button fastened near his chin;  
His autremete<sup>2</sup> was edged with golden twine,  
And his peaked shoe a lordling's might have been;  
Full well it showed he counted cost no sin:  
The trammels of the palfrey pleased his sight,  
For the horse-milliner<sup>3</sup> his head with roses dight.

"An alms, Sir Priest!" the drooping pilgrim said,  
"O let me wait within your convent-door  
Till the sun shineth high above our head  
And the loud tempest of the air is o'er.  
Helpless and old am I, alas! and poor:  
No house, nor friend, nor money in my pouch;  
All that I call my own is this my silver crouch."<sup>4</sup>

"Varlet," replied the Abbot, "cease your din;  
This is no season alms and prayers to give;  
My porter never lets a beggar in;  
None touch my ring who not in honor live."  
And now the sun with the black clouds did strive,  
And shot upon the ground his glaring ray:  
The Abbot spurred his steed, and eftsoons rode away.

<sup>1</sup> 'To signify cursing.'—*Chatterton*.

<sup>2</sup> 'A loose white robe worn by priests.'—*Chatterton*.

<sup>3</sup> Steevens, being in Bristol in 1776, saw 'horse-milliner' inscribed over a shop door, outside which stood a wooden horse decked with ribbons.

<sup>4</sup> 'Cross, crucifix.'—*Chatterton*.

## THOMAS CHATTERTON

Once more the sky was black, the thunder rolled:  
Fast running o'er the plain a priest was seen,  
Not dight full proud nor buttoned up in gold;  
His cope and jape<sup>1</sup> were grey, and eke were clean;  
A Limitour<sup>2</sup> he was, of order seen;  
And from the pathway side then turnèd he,  
Where the poor beggar lay beneath the holmen tree.

"An alms, Sir Priest," the drooping pilgrim said,  
"For sweet Saint Mary and your order's sake!"  
The Limitour then loosened his pouch-thread  
And did thereout a groat of silver take;  
The needy pilgrim did for gladness shake.  
"Here, take this silver, it may ease thy care;  
We are God's stewards all—nought of our own we  
bear.

"But ah! unhappy pilgrim, learn of me,  
Scarce any give a rentroll to their Lord:  
Here, take my semicope—thou'rt bare, I see;  
'Tis thine; the Saints will give me my reward!"  
He left the pilgrim and his way aborde.<sup>3</sup>  
Virgin and holy Saints who sit in gloure,<sup>4</sup>  
Or give the mighty will, or give the good man power!

<sup>1</sup> A short surplice worn by friars of inferior class.—*Chatterton*.

<sup>2</sup> A licensed begging friar.—*Chatterton*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Went on.'—*Chatterton*.

<sup>4</sup> 'Glory.'—*Chatterton*.

## THOMAS CHATTERTON

### *Last Verses*

**F**AREWELL, Bristolia's dingy pile of brick,  
Lovers of Mammon, worshippers of trick!  
Ye spurned the boy who gave you antique lays,  
And paid for learning with your empty praise.  
Farewell, ye guzzling aldermanic fools,  
By nature fitted for corruption's tools!  
I go to where celestial anthems swell;  
But you, when you depart, will sink to hell.  
Farewell, my mother!—cease, my anguished soul,  
Nor let distraction's billows o'er me roll!  
Have mercy, Heaven! when here I cease to live,  
And this last act of wretchedness forgive.

## GEORGE CRABBE

ENGLAND, 1754-1832

**C**RABBE has been called "the poet of the poor." He describes in simple but vivid verse their struggles, sorrows, weaknesses, crimes and pleasures, sometimes with racy humor, oftener in somber hues. His pathos, sparingly introduced, goes to the heart; his pictures of crime and despair not infrequently rise to the terrific. Crabbe was a realist, who in his day and age was to English poetry what Emile Zola is to French prose fiction. Coleridge found in Crabbe "an absolute defect of the high imagination"; yet admits that "he has much power of a certain kind." Arthur Symons says: "Crabbe did, indeed, do something which was out of fashion then: he took nature fearlessly at first hand, and set down what he saw as he saw it, and so he was a liberating influence."

## GEORGE CRABBE

Coleridge is right: Crabbe had "an absolute defect of the high imagination": he had eyes but saw not. He did not see any injustice working havoc in the old competitive struggle. He never looked into the causes of poverty. There is nothing revolutionary in his spirit—nothing of social vision that touched the souls of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the vision that was a constant light in the soul of Shelley. Crabbe could not have understood for a moment the Shelleyan cry to the toiling and exploited millions:

"Men of England, wherefore plow  
For the lords that lay ye low?"

### *The Parish Workhouse*

FROM "THE VILLAGE"

THEIRS is yon house that holds the village poor,  
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door—  
There, where the putrid vapors flagging, play,  
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day.  
There children dwell who know no parents' care;  
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;  
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,  
Forsaken wives and mothers never wed,  
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,  
And crippled age with more than childhood fears;  
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!  
The moping idiot and the madman gay. . . .

Say ye, oppressed by some fantastic woes,  
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;  
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance  
With timid eye, to read the distant glance;  
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,  
To name the nameless ever-new disease;

GEORGE CRABBE

Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,  
Which real pain and that alone can cure;  
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,  
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?  
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath  
Where all that's wretched pave the way for death?

*"Age, with Stealing Steps . . ."*

FROM "TALES OF THE HALL"

SIX years had passed, and forty ere the six,  
When time began to play his usual tricks;  
The locks once comely in a virgin's sight,  
Locks of pure brown, displayed the encroaching white;  
The blood, once fervid, now to cool began,  
And Time's strong pressure to subdue the man.  
I rode or walked as I was wont before.  
But now the bounding spirit was no more;  
A moderate pace would now my body heat;  
A walk of moderate length distress my feet.  
I showed my stranger guest those hills sublime,  
But said, "The view is poor; we need not climb."

At a friend's mansion I began to dread  
The cold neat parlor and the gay glazed bed:  
At home I felt a more decided taste,  
And must have all things in my order placed.  
I ceased to hunt; my horses pleased me less—  
My dinner more; I learned to play at chess.  
I took my dog and gun, but saw the brute  
Was disappointed that I did not shoot.  
My morning walks I now could bear to lose,  
And blessed the shower that gave me not to choose:



GEORGE CRABBE

In fact, I felt a languor stealing on;  
The active arm, the agile hand, were gone;  
Small daily actions into habits grew,  
And new dislike to forms and fashions new.  
I loved my trees in order to dispose;  
I numbered peaches, looked how stocks arose;  
Told the same story oft—in short, began to prose.

WILLIAM MARSDEN

ENGLAND, 1754-1836?

*What Is Time?*

I ASKED an aged man, with hoary hairs,  
Wrinkled and curved with worldly cares:  
"Time is the warp of life," said he; "O tell  
The young, the fair, the gay, to weave it well!"  
I asked the ancient, venerable dead,  
Sages who wrote, and warriors who bled:  
From the cold grave a hollow murmur flowed,  
"Time sowed the seed we reap in this abode!"  
I asked a dying sinner, ere the tide  
Of life had left his veins: "Time!" he replied;  
"I've lost it! ah, the treasure!" and he died.  
I asked the golden sun and silver spheres,  
Those bright chronometers of days and years:  
They answered, "Time is but a meteor glare,"  
And bade me for eternity prepare.  
I asked the Seasons, in their annual round,  
Which beautify or desolate the ground;  
And they replied (no oracle more wise)  
"'Tis Folly's blank, and Wisdom's highest prize!"

WILLIAM MARSDEN

I asked a spirit lost—but O the shriek  
That pierced my soul! I shudder while I speak.  
It cried, "A particle! a speck! a mite  
Of endless years, duration infinite!"

Of things inanimate my dial I  
Consulted, and it made me this reply:  
"Time is the season fair of living well,  
The path of glory or the path of hell."  
I asked my Bible, and methinks it said,  
"Time is the present hour, the past has fled;  
Live! live to-day! to-morrow never yet  
On any human being rose or set."  
I asked old Father Time himself at last;  
But in a moment he flew swiftly past:  
His chariot was a cloud, the viewless wind  
His noiseless steeds, which left no trace behind.  
I asked the mighty angel who shall stand  
One foot on sea and one on solid land:  
"Mortal!" he cried, "the mystery now is o'er;  
Time was, Time is, but Time shall be no more!"

## WILLIAM BLAKE

ENGLAND, 1757-1827

OF this great mystic poet-painter, Swinburne acutely observes: "No man so poor and so obscure as Blake appeared in the eyes of his generation ever did more good works in a more noble and simple spirit." Although, as Swinburne says, Blake was not generally recognized nor his genius appreciated in his own lifetime, no less a contemporary than Charles Lamb wrote in a letter to the Quaker poet Bernard Barton, in 1824: "Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he be still living. He is the William Blake, whose wild designs accompany a splendid folio edition of the *Night Thoughts*. . . . He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowdon—he has seen the Beautifullest, the Strongest and the Ugliest Man, left alone from the Massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory. . . . The man is flown, whither I know not—to Hades or a Mad House. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age."

As a rule, the poems of Blake treat of the most ordinary subjects; but suddenly a deeper note, an allusion to hidden sufferings and wounds, reveals that we are not in the presence of a shepherd who pipes, but of a prophet who knows. His *Songs of Innocence*, on infancy and first motherhood, and on subjects like *The Lamb*, are all but unrivalled in our language for simplicity, tenderness and joy. His *Songs of Experience* give the reverse side of the *Songs of Innocence*; and they see the evil of the world as a child with a man's heart would see it—with exaggerated horror. I esteem *The Tiger* as one of the master lyrics of the language.

## WILLIAM BLAKE

At the house of the Rev. Henry Mathew, in Rathborne Place, London, Blake would sometimes recite his verses, sometimes sing them. His first volume, *Poetical Sketches*, appeared in 1783: this marked an epoch in English poetry. He published his poems with his own illustrations. *Songs of Innocence*, combining verse and illustration, made 1787 memorable for all time. Into an age of feeble poetic style, Blake flung forth this volume of fresh immortal beauty. The same year, he enriched the world with *The Book of Thel*, a work of mystic twilight, and this was followed in 1790 by that strange scripture, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Then came the Prophetic Books filled with fire and darkness. Finally, in 1794, we reach *Songs of Experience*, which closed his lyric utterance, except for more prophetic pages. But the pictures continued to come in profusion, many of them bearing witness to the sublimity of his greatness.

We may look to his *Songs of Innocence*, to his illustrations for Blair's *Grave*, and particularly to his illustrations for *The Book of Job* for high examples of his creative powers. We note in Blake's work an inclination to translate ideas into images—to find for each thought a sensuous form. This procedure is more serviceable in graphic art than in poetry. Blake has the power to seize the startling aspect of ideas, whether they be simple or sublime. To know Blake you must know both his mysticism and his mythology.

### *To the Muses*

WHETHER on Ida's shady brow  
Or in the chambers of the East,  
The chambers of the Sun, that now  
From ancient melody have ceased;

WILLIAM BLAKE

Whether in heaven ye wander fair,  
Or the green corners of the earth,  
Or the blue regions of the air  
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,  
Beneath the bosom of the sea,  
Wandering in many a coral grove;  
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

How have you left the ancient love  
That bards of old enjoyed in you!  
The languid strings do scarcely move,  
The sound is forced, the notes are few.

*Reeds of Innocence*

PIPING down the valleys wild,  
Piping songs of pleasant glee,  
On a cloud I saw a child,  
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"  
So I piped with merry cheer.  
"Piper, pipe that song again,"  
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;  
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"  
So I sung the same again,  
While he wept with joy to hear.

WILLIAM BLAKE

"Piper, sit thee down and write  
In a book that all may read."  
So he vanished from my sight;  
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,  
And I stained the water clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear.

*Infant Joy*

I HAVE no name  
I am but two days old.  
What shall I call thee?  
"I happy am,  
Joy is my name,"  
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty Joy  
Sweet Joy, but two days old.  
Sweet Joy I call thee:  
Thou dost smile,  
I sing the while,  
Sweet joy befall thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE

*The Chimney Sweeper*

WHEN my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry, "'Weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!'"  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,  
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said  
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head's bare  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, and that very night,  
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!—  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack,  
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel, who had a bright key,  
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;  
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,  
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,  
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;  
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,  
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.  
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and  
warm;  
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

WILLIAM BLAKE

*The Little Black Boy*

MY mother bore me in the southern wild,  
And I am black, but O, my soul is white!  
White as an angel is the English child,  
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,  
And, sitting down before the heat of day,  
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,  
And, pointing to the East, began to say:

"Look at the rising sun: there God does live,  
And gives His light, and gives His heat away,  
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive  
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,  
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;  
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face  
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,  
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,  
Saying, 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,  
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me,  
And thus I say to little English boy.  
When I from black and he from white cloud free,  
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,



WILLIAM BLAKE

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear  
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;  
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,  
And be like him, and he will then love me.

*The Lamb*

LITTLE lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed  
By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is callèd by thy name,  
For He calls himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and He is mild,  
He became a little child.  
I a child and thou a lamb,  
We are callèd by His name.

Little lamb, God bless thee!  
Little lamb, God bless thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE

*The Tiger*

**T**IGER, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And, when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? What dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,  
Did He smile His work to see?  
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

WILLIAM BLAKE

*Night*

THE sun descending in the west,  
The evening star does shine;  
The birds are silent in their nest,  
And I must seek for mine.  
The moon, like a flower  
In heaven's high bower,  
With silent delight  
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,  
Where flocks have took delight:  
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move  
The feet of angels bright;  
Unseen they pour blessing  
And joy without ceasing  
On each bud and blossom,  
On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest  
Where birds are covered warm:  
They visit caves of every beast,  
To keep them all from harm:  
If they see any weeping  
That should have been sleeping,  
They pour sleep on their head,  
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,  
They pitying stand and weep,  
Seeking to drive their thirst away  
And keep them from the sheep.  
But, if they rush dreadful,  
The angels, most heedful,

WILLIAM BLAKE

Receive each mild spirit,  
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes  
Shall flow with tears of gold:  
And pitying the tender cries,  
And walking round the fold:  
Saying, "Wrath by His meekness,  
And, by His health, sickness,  
Are driven away  
From our immortal day.

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,  
I can lie down and sleep,  
Or think on Him who bore thy name,  
Graze after thee, and weep.  
For, washed in life's river,  
My bright mane for ever  
Shall shine like the gold  
As I guard o'er the fold."

*Love's Secret*

NEVER seek to tell thy love,  
Love that never told can be;  
For the gentle wind doth move  
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,  
I told her all my heart,  
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.  
Ah! she did depart!

WILLIAM BLAKE

Soon after she was gone from me,  
A traveller came by,  
Silently, invisibly:  
He took her with a sigh.

*Milton*

AND did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire!  
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE

*A Tear Is an Intellectual Thing*

**B**UT vain the sword and vain the bow,  
They never can work War's overthrow.  
The hermit's prayer and the widow's tear  
Alone can free the world from fear.

For a tear is an intellectual thing,  
And a sigh is the sword of an angel king,  
And the bitter groan of the martyr's woe,  
Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow.

*Our Lesser Kindred*

FROM "AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE"

**A** ROBIN redbreast in a cage  
Puts all Heaven in a rage.  
A dove-house filled with doves and pigeons  
Shudders Hell through all its regions.  
A dog starved at his master's gate  
Predicts the ruin of the State.  
A horse misused upon the road  
Calls to Heaven for human blood.  
Each outcry of the hunted hare  
A fibre from the brain does tear.  
A skylark wounded in the wing,  
A cherubim does cease to sing.  
The game-cock clipped and armed for fight  
Does the rising sun affright.  
Every wolf's and lion's howl  
Raises from Hell a human soul.  
The wild deer, wandering here and there,  
Keeps the human soul from care.  
The lamb misused breeds public strife,

WILLIAM BLAKE

And yet forgives the butcher's knife.  
He who shall hurt the little wren  
Shall never be beloved by men.  
He who the ox to wrath has moved  
Shall never be by woman loved.  
The wanton boy that kills the fly  
Shall feel the spider's enmity.  
He who torments the chafer's sprite  
Weaves a bower in endless night.  
The caterpillar on the leaf  
Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.  
Kill not the moth nor butterfly,  
For the last judgement draweth nigh.  
He who shall train the horse to war  
Shall never pass the polar bar.  
The beggar's dog and widow's cat,  
Feed them and thou wilt grow fat.

*To the Evening Star*

THOU fair-haired Angel of the Evening,  
Now whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light  
Thy bright torch of love—thy radiant crown  
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!  
Smile on our loves; and while thou drawest the  
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew  
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes  
In timely sleep. Let thy West Wind sleep on  
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes  
And wash the dusk with silver.—Soon, full soon,  
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,  
And the lion glares through the dun forest,  
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with  
Thy sacred dew; protect them with thine influence!

WILLIAM BLAKE

*Song*

**H**OW sweet I roamed from field to field,  
And tasted all the summer's pride;  
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,  
Who in the sunny beams did glide.

He showed me lilies for my hair,  
And blushing roses for my brow;  
And led me through his gardens fair,  
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,  
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;  
He caught me in his silken net,  
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,  
Then laughing sports and plays with me,  
Then stretches out my golden wing,  
And mocks my loss of liberty.

*Song*

**M**EMORY, hither come  
And tune your merry notes;  
And while upon the wind  
Your music floats,  
I'll pore upon the stream  
Where sighing lovers dream,  
And fish for fancies as they pass  
Within the watery glass.



WILLIAM BLAKE

I'll drink of the clear stream,  
And hear the linnet's song,  
And there I'll lie and dream  
The day along;  
And when night comes I'll go  
To places fit for woe,  
Walking along the darkened valley,  
With silent Melancholy.

*Mad Song*

THE wild winds weep,  
And the night is a-cold,  
Come hither, Sleep,  
And my griefs enfold:  
But lo! the morning peeps  
Over the eastern steeps,  
And the rustling beds of dawn  
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault  
Of pavèd heaven  
With sorrow fraught  
My notes are driven;  
They strike the ear of night,  
Make weak the eyes of day;  
They make mad the roaring winds  
And with tempests play.

## WILLIAM BLAKE

Like a fiend in a cloud  
With howling woe  
After night I do crowd  
And with night will go;  
I turn my back to the east  
From whence comforts have increased;  
For light doth seize my brain  
With frantic pain.

## ROBERT BURNS

SCOTLAND, 1759-1796

MAGNA CARTA, the Declaration of Independence and the French Rights of Man are not weightier documents in the history of freedom than are the songs of Burns. His satire is still keen and flashing. His musical arrows, as Emerson states, yet "sing through the air." He is so substantially a reformer that his grand plain sense links him with the greatest masters—Rabelais, Shakespeare in comedy, Cervantes, the earlier Samuel Butler. A true poet, he voices what a vast range of common life experiences! He has, as Emerson again says, "endeared the farm-house and cottage, patches and poverty, beans and barley; ale, the poor man's wine; hardship; the fear of debt; the dear society of bairns and wife, of brothers and sisters, proud of each other, knowing so few, and finding amends for want and obscurity in books and thoughts." As Burns was thus the poet of the poor, anxious, cheerful, working humanity, so was he the master of the language of lowly life. He grew up in a rural district, speaking a language unintelligible to all but

## ROBERT BURNS

natives, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. Although "Burns was a poor, forlorn creature, with the smell of Scotch drink commonly about him, the aroma of the heather was there as well. . . . He felt that rank was but an accident, and wealth often but a theft, and devoutness often but a hypocrisy, and priesthood often but a sacrilege: he divined that whatever of wisdom, benevolence or heroism existed in his emotions and aspirations, was in him by virtue of the manhood in which he stood and which was living and formative within him." So writes Thomas Lake Harris.

Burns was a victim of crushing poverty and of brute hand labor, which left him stooped and weakened while yet a young man. Immediately on the publication of his first book in 1786 his name rang over all Scotland. A brilliant social career opened. He became a guest at aristocratic tables, where he bore himself with unaffected dignity, although shocking conservatives by his sympathy with the French Revolution and his earnest advocacy of radical reforms at home.

His variety of verse is marvellous, ranging from the rollicking humor and blazing wit of *Tam O' Shanter* to the blistering satire of *Holy Willie's Prayer* and *The Holy Fair*. A few of his immortal lyrics will ring forever in the heart of the world.

Of all the poets, larger and less, not one has been truer to his own thought, more faithful to the sight of his eye, to the sound in his ear, to the emotion of his heart than Burns. His poetry beams like an aureole over every hallowed spot where he suffered and sang: it breathes on the *Banks and Braes of Bonny Doon*; it is renewed with each returning Spring in his own *Mountain Daisy*, it lives in the immortal life of *Mary in Heaven*. So long as love is precious, bereavement sacred, hypocrisy hateful, pretension ridiculous, labor honorable and true manhood noble—so long as poetry, simple, natural, eloquent, is the delight of mankind—so long will the memory of this Ayreshire bard be green.

ROBERT BURNS

*O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast*

TUNE—"THE LASS OF LIVINGSTONE"

*Here is something as simple as a blade of grass, yet it is one of the immortal lyrics. It has a fine musical setting, and its noble passion has carried it into the romantic heart of the world.*

O WERT thou in the cauld blast,  
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;  
My plaidie to the angry airt,<sup>1</sup>  
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;  
Or did misfortune's bitter storms  
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,  
Thy bield<sup>2</sup> should be my bosom,  
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,  
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,  
The desert were a paradise,  
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.  
Or were I monarch o' the globe,  
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,  
The brightest jewel in my crown,  
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

<sup>1</sup> direction of the wind.

<sup>2</sup> shelter.

ROBERT BURNS

*Auld Lang Syne*

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to min'?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days o' lang syne?

We twa hae rin about the braes,  
And pu'd the gowans<sup>1</sup> fine;  
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit<sup>2</sup>  
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,  
Frae mornin' sun till dine;<sup>3</sup>  
But seas between us braid hae roar'd  
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,<sup>4</sup>  
And gie's a hand o' thine;  
And we'll tak a right guid-willie<sup>5</sup> waught  
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,  
And surely I'll be mine;  
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet  
For auld lang syne!

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet  
For auld lang syne.

<sup>1</sup> gowans] daisies.

<sup>4</sup> fiere] partner.

<sup>2</sup> fit] foot.

<sup>3</sup> dine] dinner-time.

<sup>5</sup> guid-willie waught] friendly draught.

ROBERT BURNS

*Bonnie Doon*

YE flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,  
How can ye blume sae fair!  
How can ye chant, ye little birds,  
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,  
That sings upon the bough;  
Thou minds me o' the happy days  
When my fause luvè was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,  
That sings beside thy mate;  
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,  
And wistna o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,  
To see the woodbine twine;  
And ilka bird sang o' its luvè,  
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose  
Upon a morn in June;  
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,  
And sae was pu'd or'<sup>1</sup> noon.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose  
Upon its thorny tree;  
But my fause luvè staw<sup>2</sup> my rose,  
And left the thorn wi' me.

<sup>1</sup> or'] ere.

<sup>2</sup> staw] stole.

ROBERT BURNS

*Ae Fond Kiss*

A E fond kiss, and then we sever;  
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage<sup>1</sup> thee!

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him  
While the star of hope she leaves him?  
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,  
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy;  
Naething could resist my Nancy;  
But to see her was to love her,  
Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!  
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!  
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,  
Peace, enjoyment, love and pleasure!

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!  
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

<sup>1</sup> wage] stake, plight.

ROBERT BURNS

*Highland Mary*

YE banks and braes and streams around  
The castle o' Montgomery,  
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,  
Your waters never drumlie!<sup>1</sup>  
There simmer first unfauld her robes,  
And there the langest tarry;  
For there I took the last fareweel  
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,  
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,  
As underneath their fragrant shade  
I clasped her to my bosom!  
The golden hours on angel wings  
Flew o'er me and my dearie;  
For dear to me as light and life  
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow and locked embrace  
Our parting was fu' tender;  
And, pledging aft to meet again,  
We tore oursels asunder;  
But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,  
That nipt my flower sae early!  
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,  
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips  
I aft hae kissed sae fondly!  
And closed for aye the sparkling glance  
That dwelt on me sae kindly!

<sup>1</sup> drumlie] miry.



ROBERT BURNS

And mouldering now in silent dust  
That heart has lo'ed me dearly!  
But still within my bosom's core  
Shall live my Highland Mary.

*A Red, Red Rose*

O MY Luv'e's like a red, red rose  
That's newly sprung in June:  
O my Luv'e's like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune!

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luv'e am I:  
And I will luv'e thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;  
I will luv'e thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luv'e,  
And fare thee weel a while!  
And I will come again, my Luv'e,  
Though it were ten thousand mile.

*To Mary in Heaven*

THOU lingering star, with lessening ray,  
Thou lov'st to greet the early morn,  
Again thou usher'st in the day  
My Mary from my soul was torn.

ROBERT BURNS

O Mary! dear departed shade!  
Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?  
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,  
Can I forget the hallowed grove,  
Where by the winding Ayr we met,  
To live one day of parting love!  
Eternity will not efface  
Those records dear of transports past;  
Thy image at our last embrace,—  
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,  
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening green;  
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,  
Twined amorous round the raptured scene;  
The flowers sprang wanton to be pressed,  
The birds sang love on every spray—  
Till soon, too soon, the glowing west  
Proclaimed the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,  
And fondly broods with miser care!  
Time but the impression stronger makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.  
My Mary! dear departed shade!  
Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?  
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

ROBERT BURNS

*A Prayer in the Prospect of Death*

THOU unknown Almighty Cause  
Of all my hope and fear!  
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,  
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wandered in those paths  
Of life I ought to shun;  
As something, loudly in my breast,  
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me  
With passions wild and strong;  
And listening to their witching voice  
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,  
Or frailty stept aside,  
Do Thou, All-Good! for such Thou art,  
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have erred,  
No other plea I have,  
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still  
Delighteth to forgive.

*From "Address to the Toothache"*

MY curse upon your venom'd stang,  
That shoots my tortured gums alang,  
And through my lugs gies monie a twang,  
Wi' gnawing vengeance;

ROBERT BURNS

Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,  
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,  
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;  
Our neighbor's sympathy may ease us,  
Wi' pitying moan;  
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases!  
Ay mocks our groan.

*To a Mountain Daisy*

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOW, IN APRIL, 1786

WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,  
Thou's met me in an evil hour,  
For I maun crush amang the stoure  
Thy slender stem;  
To spare thee now is past my power,  
Thou bonny gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,  
The bonny lark, companion meet,  
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,  
Wi' speckled breast,  
When upward springing, blithe to greet  
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north  
Upon thy early, humble birth;  
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth  
Amid the storm,  
Scarce reared above the parent earth  
Thy tender form.

## ROBERT BURNS

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,  
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield:  
But thou beneath the random bield  
O' clod or stane,  
Adorns the histie stibble-field,  
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,  
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,  
Thou lifts thy unassuming head  
In humble guise;  
But now the share uptears thy bed,  
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,  
Sweet floweret of the rural shade,  
By love's simplicity betrayed,  
And guileless trust,  
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid  
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,  
On life's rough ocean luckless starred:  
Unskillful he to note the card  
Of prudent lore,  
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,  
And overwhelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,  
Who long with wants and woes has striven,  
By human pride or cunning driven  
To misery's brink,  
Till wrenched of every stay but Heaven,  
He, ruined, sink!

## ROBERT BURNS

Even thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,  
That fate is thine—no distant date:  
Stern Ruin's plowshare drives, elate,  
Full on thy bloom,  
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight  
Shall be thy doom!

### *For a' That.*

*Robert Burns, the plowman and poet, "dinnered wi' a lord."  
The story goes that he was put at the second table. That  
lord is dead, but Robert Burns still lives.*

IS there, for honest poverty,  
That hangs his head, and a' that?  
The coward slave, we pass him by,  
We dare be poor for a' that;  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Our toils obscure, and a' that;  
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that!

What though on hamely fare we dine,  
Wear hoddin-gray,<sup>1</sup> and a' that;  
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,  
A man's a man for a' that!  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Their tinsel show, and a' that;  
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,  
Is king o' men for a' that!

<sup>1</sup> hoddin-gray] coarse woolen clothes.

ROBERT BURNS

Ye see yon birkie<sup>1</sup> ca'd a lord,  
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;  
Though hundreds worship at his word,  
He's but a coof<sup>2</sup> for a' that;  
For a' that, and a' that,  
His riband, star, and a' that,  
The man of independent mind,  
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can make a belted knight,  
A marquis, duke, and a' that;  
But an honest man's aboon his might,  
Guid faith be maunna fa'<sup>3</sup> that!  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Their dignities, and a' that  
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,  
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—  
As come it will for a' that—  
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,  
May bear the gree,<sup>4</sup> and a' that;  
For a' that, and a' that,  
It's coming yet for a' that,  
That man to man, the warld o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that!

<sup>1</sup> birkie] impudent fellow.

<sup>2</sup> coof] fool; blockhead.

<sup>3</sup> fa'] manage

<sup>4</sup> gree] preëminence

ROBERT BURNS

*To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her  
Nest, with the Plough, November, 1785*

WEE, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,  
Wi' bickerin brattle!<sup>1</sup>  
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
Wi' murd'ring pattie!<sup>2</sup>

I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Has broken Nature's social union,  
An' justifies that ill opinion,  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,  
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;  
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!  
A daimen-icker<sup>3</sup> in a thrave  
'S a sma' request:  
I'll get a blessing wi' the lave,  
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!  
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!  
An' naething, now, to big<sup>4</sup> a new one,  
O' foggage green!  
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,  
Baith snell<sup>5</sup> an' keen!

<sup>1</sup> hurry.

<sup>2</sup> hand-stick for clearing the plough.

<sup>3</sup> An ear of corn now and then; a thrave is twenty-four sheaves.

<sup>4</sup> build.

<sup>5</sup> bitter.



ROBERT BURNS

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,  
An' weary winter comin fast,  
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,  
          Thou thought to dwell,  
Till, crash! the cruel coultter past  
          Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble  
Hast cost thee mony a weary nibble!  
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,  
          But <sup>1</sup> house or hald,<sup>2</sup>  
To thole <sup>3</sup> the winter's sleety dribble,  
          An' cranreuch <sup>4</sup> cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,<sup>5</sup>  
In proving foresight may be vain:  
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,  
          Gang aft agley,<sup>6</sup>  
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,  
          For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee:  
But, och! I backward cast my e'e  
          On prospects drear!  
An' forward, though I canna see,  
          I guess an' fear!

<sup>1</sup> without.  
<sup>2</sup> holding.  
<sup>3</sup> endure.

<sup>4</sup> hoar-frost.  
<sup>5</sup> thyself alone.  
<sup>6</sup> awry.

ROBERT BURNS

*Bannockburn. Robert Bruce's Address to  
His Army*

TUNE—"HEY TUTTIE TATTIE"

SCOTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;  
See the front o' battle lower;  
See approach proud Edward's power—  
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?  
Wha can fill a coward's grave?  
Wha sae base as be a slave?  
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and law  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Free-man stand, or free-man fa'?  
Let him on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!  
By your sons in servile chains!  
We will drain our dearest veins,  
But they *shall* be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!  
Tyrant's fall in every foe!  
Liberty's in every blow!  
Let us do, or die!

ROBERT BURNS

*Address to the Wood-lark*

O STAY, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,  
Nor quit for me the trembling spray;  
A hapless lover courts thy lay,  
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,  
That I may catch thy melting art;  
For surely that wad touch her heart,  
Wha kills me wi' disdainin'.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,  
And heard thee as the careless wind?  
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow joined  
Sic notes o' wae could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care;  
O' speechless grief, and dark despair;  
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!  
Or my poor heart is broken!

*Tam o' Shanter. A Tale*

*Of Brownie and of Bogilie full is this Buke.*  
Gawin Douglas.

WHEN chapman billies<sup>1</sup> leave the street,  
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,  
As market-days are wearing late,  
An' folk begin to tak the gate;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pedlar fellows.

<sup>2</sup> road.

## ROBERT BURNS

While we sit housing at the nappy,<sup>1</sup>  
 An' getting fou and unco happy,  
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,  
 The mosses, waters, slaps<sup>2</sup> and stiles,  
 That lie between us and our hame,  
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,  
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam O' Shanter,  
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:  
 (Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses  
 For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,  
 As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!  
 She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,<sup>3</sup>  
 A blethering, blustering, drunken bhellum;<sup>4</sup>  
 That frae November till October,  
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;  
 That ilka melder,<sup>5</sup> wi' the miller,  
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;  
 That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,  
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;  
 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,  
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton<sup>6</sup> Jean till Monday.  
 She prophesied that, late or soon,  
 Thou wad be found deep drowned in Doon;  
 Or caught wi' warlocks<sup>7</sup> in the mirk,<sup>8</sup>  
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

<sup>1</sup> ale.

<sup>4</sup> idle talker.

<sup>6</sup> Kirkton is the distinctive name of a village in which the parish  
 kirk stands.

<sup>7</sup> wizards.

<sup>2</sup> gaps in fences.

<sup>3</sup> blockhead.

<sup>5</sup> grinding lot.

<sup>8</sup> dark.

## ROBERT BURNS

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,<sup>1</sup>  
To think how many counsels sweet,  
How many lengthened, sage advices,  
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,  
Tam had got planted unco right,  
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,  
Wi' reaming swats,<sup>2</sup> that drank divinely;  
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,  
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:  
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;  
They had been fou for weeks thegither.

The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;  
And ay the ale was growing better:  
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,  
Wi' favors, secret, sweet and precious:  
The souter<sup>3</sup> tauld his queerest stories;  
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:  
The storm without might rair and rustle,  
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,  
E'en drowned himself amang the nappy!  
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,  
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure;  
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,  
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

<sup>1</sup> makes me weep.

<sup>2</sup> frothing ale.

<sup>3</sup> shoemaker.

## ROBERT BURNS

But pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or like the snow falls in the river,  
A moment white—then melts for ever;  
Or like the borealis race,  
That flit ere you can point their place;  
Or like the rainbow's lovely form  
Evanishing amid the storm.  
Nae man can tether time or tide;  
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;  
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,  
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;  
And sic a night he taks the road in,  
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;  
The rattling showers rose on the blast;  
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;  
Loud, deep and lang, the thunder bellowed:  
That night, a child might understand,  
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,  
A better never lifted leg,  
Tam skelpit<sup>1</sup> on through dub and mire,  
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;  
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;  
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;  
Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,  
Lest bogles catch him unawares;  
Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,  
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

<sup>1</sup> hurried.

## ROBERT BURNS

By this time he was cross the ford,  
Where in the snaw the chapman smooored;<sup>1</sup>  
And past the birks<sup>2</sup> and meikle<sup>3</sup> stane,  
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;  
And through the whins, and by the cairn,  
Where hunters fand the murdered bairn;  
And near the thorn, aboon the well,  
Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.  
Before him Doon pours all his floods;  
The doubling storm roars through the woods;  
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;  
Near and more near the thunders roll:  
When, glimmering through the groaning trees,  
Kirk Alloway seemed in a bleeze;  
Through ilka bore<sup>4</sup> the beams were glancing;  
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!  
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!  
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;  
Wi' usquebae, we'll face the Devil!  
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,  
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.  
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,  
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,  
She ventured forward on the light;  
And, now! Tam saw an unco sight!  
Warlocks and witches in a dance;  
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,  
But hornpipes, jig, strathspeys and reels,  
Put life and mettle in their heels.  
At winnock-bunker<sup>5</sup> in the east,

<sup>1</sup> smothered.

<sup>4</sup> hole in the wall.

<sup>2</sup> birches.

<sup>3</sup> big.

<sup>5</sup> window-seat.

## ROBERT BURNS

There sat old Nick, in shape o' beast;  
A towzie<sup>1</sup> tyke, black, grim and large,  
To gie them music was his charge:  
He screwed the pipes and gart<sup>2</sup> them skirl,<sup>3</sup>  
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.  
Coffins stood round, like open presses,  
That shawed the dead in their last dresses;  
And by some devilish cantrip<sup>4</sup> slight  
Each in its cauld hand held a light,  
By which heroic Tam was able  
To note upon the haly table,  
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;<sup>5</sup>  
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;  
A thief, new-cuttet frae a rape,  
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;  
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;  
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;  
A garter, which a babe had strangled;  
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,  
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,  
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;  
Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',  
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowred, amazed and curious,  
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:  
The piper loud and louder blew;  
The dancers quick and quicker flew;  
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,  
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,

<sup>1</sup> shaggy.

<sup>2</sup> forced.

<sup>3</sup> scream.

<sup>4</sup> magic.

<sup>5</sup> irons.



## ROBERT BURNS

And coost her duddies<sup>1</sup> to the wark,  
And linket<sup>2</sup> at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam, had they been queans  
A' plump and strapping in their teens;  
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie<sup>3</sup> flannen,  
Been 'snaw-white seventeen-hunder linnen<sup>4</sup>  
Thir<sup>5</sup> breeks o' mine, my only pair,  
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,  
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,<sup>6</sup>  
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But withered bedlams, auld and droll,  
Rigwoodie hags, wad spean<sup>7</sup> a foal,  
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,<sup>8</sup>  
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,  
There was ae winsome wench and walie,  
That night enlisted in the core,  
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore;  
For mony a beast to dead she shot,  
And perished mony a bonie boat,  
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,<sup>9</sup>  
And kept the country-side in fear,)  
Her cutty<sup>10</sup> sark, o' Paisley harn,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> clothes.

<sup>2</sup> linked.

<sup>3</sup> greasy.

<sup>4</sup> The manufacturing term for a fine linen, woven in a reed of 1700 divisions.—*Cromek*.

<sup>5</sup> these.

<sup>6</sup> loins.

<sup>7</sup> wean.

<sup>8</sup> short staff.

<sup>9</sup> barley.

<sup>10</sup> short.

<sup>11</sup> Very coarse linen.

ROBERT BURNS

That, while a lassie, she had worn,  
In longitude though sorely scanty,  
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—  
Ah! little kenned thy reverend granny,  
That sark she coft<sup>1</sup> for her we: Nanny,  
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,)  
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour;  
Sic flights are far beyond her power;  
To sing how Nannie lap and flang  
(A souple jade she was, and strang),  
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,  
And thought his very een enriched;  
Even Satan glowred, and fidget fu' fain,  
And hotched and blew wi' might and main:  
Till first ae caper, syne<sup>2</sup> anither,  
Tam tint<sup>3</sup> his reason a' thegither,  
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"  
And in an instant all was dark;  
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,  
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,<sup>4</sup>  
When plundering herds assail their byke;<sup>5</sup>  
As open pussie's mortal foes,  
When, pop! she starts before their nose;  
As eager runs the market-crowd,  
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;  
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,  
Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

<sup>1</sup> bought.

<sup>2</sup> then.

<sup>3</sup> lost.

<sup>4</sup> hustle.

<sup>5</sup> hive.

## ROBERT BURNS

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam; thou'll get thy fairin!  
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!  
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!  
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!  
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,  
And win the key-stane<sup>1</sup> of the brig;  
There at them thou thy tail may toss,  
A running stream they darena cross.  
But ere the key-stane she could make,  
The fient<sup>2</sup> a tail she had to shake!  
For Nannie, far before the rest,  
Hard upon noble Maggie pressed,  
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;<sup>3</sup>  
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—  
Ae spring brought off her master hale,  
But left behind her ain gray tail:  
The carlin caught her by the rump,  
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,  
Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed;  
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,  
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,  
Think, ye may buy the joys owre dear,  
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

<sup>1</sup> It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—R. B.

<sup>2</sup> deuce (fiend).

<sup>3</sup> aim.

ROBERT BURNS

*Address to the Deil*

*O prince! O Chief of many throned Powers,  
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.—*  
Milton.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,  
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick or Clootie,  
Wha in your cavern grim an' sootie,  
Closed under hatches,  
Spairges<sup>1</sup> about the brunstane cootie,<sup>2</sup>  
To scaud poor wretches.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,  
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;  
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,  
Even to a deil,  
To skelp<sup>3</sup> an' scaud poor dogs like me,  
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;  
Far kenned an' noted is thy name:  
An', though yon lowin heugh's<sup>4</sup> thy hame,  
Thou travels far;  
An', faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,  
Nor blate nor scaur<sup>5</sup>

Whiles, ranging like a roarin' lion,  
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;  
Whiles on the strong-winged tempest flyin,  
Tirlin<sup>6</sup> the kirks;

<sup>1</sup> splashes.

<sup>2</sup> footpail.

<sup>3</sup> slap.

<sup>4</sup> flaming pit.

<sup>5</sup> Neither bashful nor apt to be scared.

<sup>6</sup> unroofing.

ROBERT BURNS

Whiles in the human bosom pryin,  
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,  
In lanely glens ye like to stray;  
Or where auld ruined castles, gray,  
Nod to the moon,  
Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way,  
Wi' eldritch croon.<sup>1</sup>

When twilight did my grannie summon,  
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!  
Aft 'yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,  
W' eerie drone;  
Or, rustlin, through the boortrees<sup>2</sup> comin,  
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,  
The stars shot down wi' sklentint<sup>3</sup> light,  
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,  
Ayont the lough;  
Ye, like a rash-buss,<sup>4</sup> stood in sight,  
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve<sup>5</sup> did shake,  
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,  
When wi' an eldritch, stoor,<sup>6</sup> 'quaick, quaick,'  
Amang the springs,  
Awa ye squattered<sup>7</sup> like a drake,  
On whistling wings.

<sup>1</sup> frightful moan.

<sup>2</sup> elder trees.

<sup>3</sup> slanting.

<sup>4</sup> a bush of rushes.

<sup>5</sup> fist.

<sup>6</sup> hoarse.

<sup>7</sup> fluttered.

## ROBERT BURNS

Let warlocks<sup>1</sup> grim, an' withered hags,  
Tell how wi' you on ragweed<sup>2</sup> nags,  
They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,  
Wi' wicked speed;  
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,  
Owre howkit<sup>3</sup> dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,  
May plunge an' plunge the kirn<sup>4</sup> in vain;  
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen  
By witching skill;  
An' dawtit,<sup>5</sup> twal-pint<sup>6</sup> Hawkie's gaen  
As yell's<sup>7</sup> the bill.<sup>8</sup>

When thowes<sup>e</sup> dissolve the snawy hoord,<sup>10</sup>  
An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,  
Then Water-kelpies haunt the foord,  
By your direction,  
An' nighted Travellers are allured  
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing Spunkies<sup>11</sup>  
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:  
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys  
Delude his eyes,  
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,  
Ne'er mair to rise.

<sup>2</sup> ragwort.<sup>5</sup> dugged up.<sup>4</sup> churn.<sup>6</sup> twelve-pint.  
<sup>7</sup> miller's.<sup>6</sup> bull.  
<sup>2</sup> then.

10 hoard.  
11 Will.

-- Will-o'-the-wisp.

•

When masons' mystic word an' grip,  
In storms an' tempests raise you up,  
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,  
Or, strange to tell!  
The youngest 'brother' ye wad whip  
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,  
When youthfu' lovers first were paired,  
An' all the soul of love they shared,  
The raptur'd hour,  
Sweet on the fragrant, flowery swaird,  
In shady bower:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawin<sup>1</sup> dog!  
Ye came to Paradise incog,  
An' played on man a cursed brogue,<sup>2</sup>  
(Black be you fa'<sup>3</sup>!)  
An' gied the infant warld a shog,<sup>4</sup>  
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,<sup>5</sup>  
Wi' reekit duds,<sup>6</sup> an' reestit gizz,<sup>7</sup>  
Ye did present your smoutie phiz<sup>8</sup>  
'Mang better folk,  
An' sklented<sup>9</sup> on the man of Uzz  
Your spitefu' joke?

<sup>1</sup> Who draws stealthily the door-bolt.

<sup>2</sup> trick.

3 lot.

\* shock.

<sup>6</sup> bustle.

<sup>6</sup> smoky rags.

<sup>7</sup> singed periwig.

<sup>s</sup> blackened face.

<sup>9</sup> slanted.

## ROBERT BURNS

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,  
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',  
While scabs an' blotches did him gall,  
Wi' bitter claw,  
An' lows'd<sup>1</sup> his ill-tongue wicked scaul,<sup>2</sup>  
Was warst ava?<sup>3</sup>

But a' your doings to rehearse,  
You wily snares and fechtin' fierce,  
Sin' that day Michael<sup>s</sup> did you pierce,  
Down to this time  
Wad ding<sup>s</sup> a' Lallan<sup>t</sup> tongue, or Erse,  
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,  
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,  
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'  
To your black pit;  
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',  
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!  
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!  
Ye aiblins<sup>10</sup> might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a stake—  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Even for your sake!

<sup>1</sup> loosed.

<sup>3</sup> scold.

<sup>3</sup> of all.

<sup>4</sup> fighting.

<sup>5</sup> Vide Milton, Book vi.—R. B.

<sup>6</sup> worst.

<sup>7</sup> Lowland.

<sup>8</sup> tripping.

dodging.

<sup>10</sup> perhaps.



## WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES

ENGLAND, 1762-1850

THIS poet-churchman came into literary prominence in 1789 on publishing a collection of fourteen sonnets, which was received with extraordinary favor, not only by the general public in England, but also by such men as Coleridge and Wordsworth. In 1807 he published a *Life of Alexander Pope*, in the preface to which he expressed some views on poetry which resulted in a heated controversy with Byron, Campbell and others.

### *Time and Grief*

O TIME! who know'st a lenient hand to lay  
Softest on sorrow's wound, and slowly thence  
(Lulling to sad repose the weary sense)  
The faint pang stealest unperceived away;  
On thee I rest my only hope at last,  
And think, when thou hast dried the bitter tear  
That flows in vain o'er all my soul held dear,  
I may look back on every sorrow past,  
And meet life's peaceful evening with a smile:  
As some lone bird, at day's departing hour,  
Sings in the sunbeam, of the transient shower  
Forgetful, though its wings are wet the while;  
Yet ah! how much must this poor heart endure,  
Which hopes from thee, and thee alone, a cure!

MARY A. BARR  
SCOTLAND, 18TH CENTURY

*I Wouldna Gie a Copper Plack*

**I** WOULDNA gie a copper plack  
For only man that turns his back  
On duty clear;  
I wouldna tak his word or note,  
I wouldna trust him for a groat,  
Nor lift an oar in only boat  
Which he might steer.

I wouldna gie an auld bawbee  
For ony man that I could see  
Wha didna hold  
The sweetness o' his mither's name,  
The kindness o' his brither's claim,  
The honor o' a woman's fame  
For mair than gold.

CATHERINE MARIA FANSHAWE

ENGLAND, 1765-1834

*Riddle*

'TWAS whispered in Heaven, 'twas muttered in  
Hell,

And echo caught softly the sound as it fell;  
In the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,  
And the depth of the ocean its presence confessed;  
'Twas seen in the lightning, 'twas heard in the thunder,  
'Twill be found in the spheres when they're riven  
asunder;

'Twas given to man with his earliest breath;  
It assists at his birth and attends him in death,  
Presides o'er his happiness, honor and health,  
'Tis the prop of his house and the end of his wealth;  
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound;  
With the husbandman toils, and with monarchs is  
crowned;

In the heaps of the miser, 'tis hoarded with care,  
But is sure to be lost in the prodigal heir;  
Without it the soldier and sailor may roam,  
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home;  
In the whispers of conscience it there will be found,  
Nor e'er in the whirlwind of passion be drowned;  
It softens the heart, and though deaf to the ear,  
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.

But in shades let it rest, like an elegant flower:  
Oh! breathe on it softly, it dies in an hour.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT (LADY NAIRNE)  
SCOTLAND, 1766-1845

*The Land o' the Leal*

I'M wearin' awa', John,  
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,  
I'm wearin' awa'  
To the land o' the leal.  
There's nae sorrow there, John,  
There's neither cauld nor care, John,  
The day is aye fair  
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,  
She was baith gude and fair, John;  
And oh, we grudged her sair  
To the land o' the leal.  
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John  
And joy's a-coming fast, John,  
The joy that's aye to last  
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear's the joy was bought, John  
Sae free the battle fought, John,  
That sinfu' man e'er brought  
To the land o' the leal.  
O, dry your glistening e'e, John!  
My saul langs to be free, John,  
And angels beckon me  
To the land o' the leal.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT

O, haud ye leal and true, John!  
Your day it's wearin' through, John,  
And I'll welcome you  
To the land o' the leal.  
Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,  
This warld's cares are vain, John,  
We'll meet, and we'll be fain,  
In the land o' the leal.

JAMES HOGG

SCOTLAND, 1770-1835

AFTER a few hits and misses in the various departments of literature, Hogg, popularly and poetically known as the Ettrick Shepherd, from the fact that he was born at Ettrick, Scotland, and long shepherded sheep for a livelihood, rode into popularity with *The Queen's Wake* (1813). This collection of songs and ballads stamped Hogg as—after Burns—the greatest poet that had ever sprung from the hard struggling life of the people. His signal achievement, *The Witch of Fife*, is an example of Scotch wit and humor, well worthy of a place in any anthology.

*The Witch of Fife*

WHERE have ye been, ye ill woman,  
These three lang nights frae hame?  
What gars the sweat drap frae yer brow,  
Like drops o' the saut sea-faem?

"It fears me muckle ye have seen  
What gude man never knew;  
It fears me muckle ye have been,  
Where the gray cock never crew.

JAMES HOGG

"But the spell may crack, and the bridle break,  
Then sharp yer word will be;  
Ye had better sleep in yer bed at hame,  
Wi' yer dear little bairns and me."

"Sit dune, sit dune, my leal auld man,  
Sit dune, and listen to me;  
I'll gar the hair stand on yer crown,  
And the could sweat blind yer e'e.

"But tell nae words, my gude auld man,  
Tell never a word again;  
Or dear shall be your courtesy,  
And driche and sair yer pain.

"The first leet night, when the new moon set,  
When all was douffe and mirk,  
We saddled our nags wi' the moonfern leaf,  
And rode frae Kilmerrin kirk.

"Some horses were of the brume-cow framed,  
And some of the green bay tree;  
But mine was made of ane hemlock shaw,  
And a stout stallion was he.

"We raide the tod doune on the hill,  
The martin on the law;  
And we hunted the owlet out o' breath,  
And forced him doune to fa'."

"What guid was that, ye ill woman?  
What guid was that to thee?  
Ye would better have been in yer bed at hame,  
Wi' yer dear little bairns and me."

JAMES HOGG

"And aye we rode, as sae merrily rode,  
Through the merkest gloffs of the night;  
And we swam the flood, and we darnit the wood,  
Till we came to the Lommond height.

"And when we came to the Lommond height,  
Sae lightly we lighted doune;  
And we drank frae the horns that never grew,  
The beer that was never browin.

"Then up therè rose a wee wee man,  
From neath the moss-gray stane;  
His face was wan like the colliflower,  
For he neither had blude nor bane.

"He set a reed-pipe till his mouth;  
And he played sae bonnily,  
Till the gray curlew, and the blackcock flew  
To listen his melody.

"It rang sae sweet through the green Lommond,  
That the night-wind lowner blew;  
And it soupit alang the Loch Leven,  
And wakened the white sea-mew.

"It rang sae sweet through the green Lommond,  
Sae sweetly and sae shrill,  
That the weasels leaped out of their mouldy holes,  
And danced on the midnight hill.

"The corby crow came gledging near,  
The erne gaed veering bye;  
And the trouts leaped out of the Leven Loch,  
Charmed with the melody.

JAMES HOGG

"And aye we danced on the green Lommond,  
Till the dawn on the ocean grew:  
Nae wonder I was a weary wight  
When I cam hame to you."

"What guid, what guid, my weird, weird wyfe,  
What guid was that to thee?  
Ye wad better have been in yer bed at hame,  
Wi' yer dear little bairns and me."

"The second night, when the new moon set,  
O'er the roaring sea we flew;  
The cockle-shell our trusty bark,  
Our sails of the green sea-rue.

"And the bauld winds blew, and the fire-flauchts  
flew,  
And the sea ran to the sky;  
And the thunder it growled, and the sea-dogs  
howled,  
As we gaed scurrying by.

"And aye we mounted the sea-green hills,  
Till we brushed through the clouds of heaven,  
Then soused downright like the stern-shot light,  
Fra the lift's blue casement driven.

"But our tackle stood, and our bark was good,  
And sae pang was our pearly prow;  
When we couldna speil the brow of the waves,  
We needled them through below.

"As fast as the hail, as fast as the gale,  
As fast as the midnight leme,



JAMES HOGG

We bored the breast of the bursting swale,  
Or fluffed in the floating faem.

"And when to the Norroway shore we wan,  
We mounted our steeds of the wind,  
And we splashed the floode, and we darnit the  
wood,  
And we left the shore behind.

"Fleet is the roe on the green Lommond,  
And swift is the couryng grew;  
The rein-deer dun can eithly run,  
When the hounds and the horns pursue.

"But neither the roe, nor the reindeer dun,  
The hind nor the couryng grew,  
Could fly o'er mountain, moor, and dale,  
As our braw steeds they flew.

"The dales were deep, and the Doffrins steep,  
And we rose to the skies ee-bree:  
White, white was our road that was never trode,  
O'er the snows of eternity.

"And when we came to the Lapland lone,  
The fairies were all in array,  
For all the genii of the north  
Were keeping their holiday.

"The warlock men and the weird women,  
And the fays of the wood and the steep,  
And the phantom hunters all were there,  
And the mermaids of the deep.

JAMES HOGG

"And they washed us all with the witch-water,  
Distilled frae the moorland dew,  
Till our beauty bloomed like the Lapland rose,  
That wild in the forest grew."

"Ye lee, ye lee, ye ill woman,  
Sae loud as I hear ye lee!  
For the worst-faured wyfe on the shores of Fyfe  
Is comely compared wi' thee."

"Then the mermaids sang, and the woodlands rang,  
Sae sweetly swelled the choir;  
On every cliff a harp they hang,  
On every tree a lyre.

"And aye they sang, and the woodlands rang,  
And we drank, and we drank sae deep;  
Then soft in the arms of the warlock men,  
We laid us dune to sleep."

"Away, away, ye ill woman,  
An ill death might ye dee!  
When ye hae proved sae false to yer God,  
Ye can never prove true to me."

"And there we learned frae the fairy folk,  
And frae our master true,  
The words that can bear us through the air,  
And locks and bars undo.

"Last night we met at Maisry's cot;  
Right well the words we knew;  
And we set a foot on the black cruik-shell,  
And out at the lum we flew.

JAMES HOGG

"And we flew o'er hill, and we flew o'er dale,  
And we flew o'er firth and sea,  
Untill we cam to merry Carlisle,  
Where we lighted on the lea.

"We gaed to the vault beyond the tower,  
Where we entered free as air;  
And we drank, and we drank of the bishop's wine  
Till we could drink nae mair."

"Gin that be true, my gude auld wyfe,  
Whilk thou hast tauld to me,  
Betide my death, betide my lyfe,  
I'll bear thee company.

"Next time ye gang to merry Carlisle  
To drink of the blude-red wine,  
Beshrew my heart, I'll fly with thee,  
If the deil should fly behind."

"Ah! little ye ken, my silly auld man,  
The dangers we maun dree;  
Last night we drank of the bishop's wine,  
Till near near taen were we.

"Afore we wan to the sandy ford,  
The gor-cocks nichering flew;  
The lofty crest of Ettrick Pen  
Was waved about with blue,  
And, flichtering through the air, we fanc  
The chill chill morning dew.

"As we flew o'er the hills of Braid,  
The sun rose fair and clear;

JAMES HOGG

There gurly James, and his barons braw,  
Were out to hunt the deer.

"Their bows they drew, their arrows flew,  
And pierced the air with speed,  
Till purple fell the morning dew  
With witch-blude rank and red.

"Little ye ken, my silly auld man,  
The dangers we maun dree;  
Ne wonder I am a weary wight  
When I come hame to thee."

"But tell me the *word*, my gude auld wyfe,  
Come tell it me speedily;  
For I long to drink of the gude red wine,  
And to wing the air with thee.

"Yer hellish horse I willna ride,  
Nor sail the seas in the wind;  
But I can flee as well as thee,  
And I'll drink till ye be blind."

"O fy! O fy! my leal auld man,  
That word I darena tell;  
It would turn this warld all upside down,  
And make it warse than hell.

"For all the lasses in the land  
Wald mount the wind and fly;  
And the men would doff their doublets syde,  
And after them would ply."

But the auld gude man was a cunning auld man,  
And a cunning auld man was he;

JAMES HOGG

And he watched and he watched for mony a  
night,  
The witches' flight to see.

One night he darnit in Maisry's cot;  
The fearless hags came in;  
And he heard the word of awesome weird;  
And he saw their deeds of sin.

Then ane by ane, they said that word,  
As fast to the fire they drew;  
Then set a foot on the black cruik-shell,  
And out at the lum they flew.

The auld gudeman came frae his hole  
With fear and muckle dread,  
But yet he couldna think to rue,  
For the wine came in his head.

He set his foot in the black cruik-shell,  
With a fixed and a wawling ee;  
And he said the word that I darena say,  
And out at the lum flew he.

The witches scaled the moon-beam pale;  
Deep groaned the trembling wind;  
But they never wist that our auld gudeman  
Was hovering them behind.

They flew to the vaults of merry Carlisle,  
Where they entered free as air;  
And they drank, and they drank of the bishop's  
wine  
Till they coulde drink nae mair.

## JAMES HOGG

The auld gudeman he grew sae crouse,  
He danced on the mouldy ground,  
And he sang the bonniest songs of Fife,  
And he tuzzlit the kerlyngs round.

And aye he pierced the tither butt,  
And he sucked, and he sucked sae lang,  
Till his een they closed, and his voice grew low,  
And his tongue would hardly gang.

The kerlyngs drank of the bishop's wine  
Till they scented the morning wind;  
Then clove again the yielding air,  
And left the auld man behind.

And aye he slept on the damp damp floor,  
He slept and he snored amain;  
He never dreamed he was far frae hame,  
Or that the auld wives were gane.

And aye he slept on the damp damp floor,  
Till past the mid-day height,  
When wakened by five rough Englishmen,  
That trailed him to the light.

"Now wha are ye, ye silly auld man,  
That sleeps sae sound and sae weel?  
How gat ye into the bishop's vault  
Through locks and bars of steel?"

The auld gudeman he tried to speak,  
But ane word he couldna finde;  
He tried to think, but his head whirled round,  
And ane thing he couldna minde:

JAMES HOGG

"I cam frae Fyfe," the auld man cried,  
"And I cam on the midnight winde."

They nicked the auld man, and they pricked the  
    auld man,  
And they yerked his limbs with twine,  
Till the red blude ran in his hose and shoon,  
    But some cried it was wine.

They licked the auld man, and they pricked  
    the auld man,  
And they tyed him till ane stone;  
And they set ane bele-fire him about,  
    To burn him skin and bone.

"O wae to me!" said the puir auld man,  
    "That ever I saw the day!  
And wae be to all the ill women  
    That lead puir men astray!

"Let nevir ane auld man after this  
    To lawless greede incline;  
Let never ane auld man after this  
    Rin post to the deil for wine."

The reeke flew up in the auld man's face,  
    And choked him bitterlye;  
And the low cam up with an angry blaze,  
    And he singed his auld breck-nee.

He looked to the land frae whence he came,  
    For looks he could get ne mae;  
And he thoughte of his dear little bairns at  
    hame,  
And O the auld man was wae!

JAMES HOGG

But they turned their faces to the sun,  
With gloffe and wonderous glare,  
For they saw ane thing baith large and dun,  
Comin sweeping down the air.

That bird it cam frae the lands o' Fife,  
And it cam right tymeouslye,  
For who was it but the auld man's wife,  
Just comed his death to see.

She put ane red cap on his head,  
And the auld gudeman looked fain,  
Then whispered ane word intil his lug,  
And toved to the aire again.

The auld gudeman he gae ane bob  
I' the midst o' the burning lowe;  
And the shackles that bound him to the ring,  
They fell frae his arms like tow.

He drew his breath, and he said the word,  
And he said it with muckle glee,  
Then set his feet on the burning pile,  
And away to the air flew he.

Till ance he cleared the swirling reeke,  
He lukit baith feared and sad;  
But when he wan to the light blue aire,  
He laughed as he'd been mad.

His arms were spread, and his head was high,  
And his feet stuck out behind;  
And the laibies of the auld man's coat  
Were wauffing in the wind.



## JAMES HOGG

And aye he neicherit, and aye he flew,  
For he thought the play sae rare;  
It was like the voice of the gander blue,  
When he flees through the air.

He lookèd back to the Carlisle men  
As he bored the norlan sky;  
He nodded his head, and gave ane girn  
But he never said gude-bye.

They vanished far i' the lift's blue wale,  
Nae maire the English saw,  
But the auld man's laugh came on the gale,  
With a lang and a loud guffaw.

May everilke man in the land of Fife  
Read what the drinker's dree;  
And never curse his puir auld wife,  
Right wicked although she be.

### *Jock Johnstone, the Tinkler*

O, CAME ye ower by the Yoke-burn Ford,  
Or down the King's Road of the cleuch?<sup>1</sup>  
Or saw ye a knight and a lady bright,  
Wha ha'e gane the gate they baith shall rue?"

"I saw a knight and a lady bright  
Ride up the cleuch at the break of day;  
The knight upon a coal-black steed,  
And the dame on one of a silver-gray.

<sup>1</sup> dell.

## JAMES HOGG

"And the lady's palfrey flew the first,  
With many a clang of silver bell;  
Swift as the raven's morning flight  
The two went scouring ower the fell.

"By this time they are man and wife,  
And standing in St. Mary's fane;  
And the lady in the grass-green silk  
A maid you will never see again."

"But I can tell thee, saucy wight—  
And that the runaway shall prove—  
Revenge to a Douglas is as sweet  
As maiden charms or maiden's love."

"Since thou say'st that, my Lord Douglas,  
Good faith some clinking there will be;  
Beshrew my heart but and my sword,  
If I winna turn and ride with thee!"

They whipped out ower the Shepherd Cleuch,  
And doun the links o' the Corsecleuch Burn;  
And aye the Douglas swore by his sword  
To win his love, or ne'er return.

"First fight your rival, Lord Douglas,  
And then brag after, if you may;  
For the Earl of Ross is as brave a lord  
As ever gave good weapon sway.

"But I for ae poor siller merk,  
Or thirteen pennies and a bawbee,  
Will tak in hand to fight you baith,  
Or beat the winner, whiche'er it be."

JAMES HOGG

The Douglas turned him on his steed,  
And I wat a loud laughter leuch he:  
"Of a' the fools I have ever met,  
Man, I ha'e never met ane like thee.

"Art thou akin to lord or knight,  
Or courtly squire or warrior leal?"  
"I am a tinkler," quo' the wight,  
"But I like croun-cracking unco weel."

When they came to St. Mary's kirk,  
The chaplain shook for very fear;  
And aye he kissed the cross, and said,  
"What deevil has sent that Douglas here!

"He neither values book nor ban,  
But curses all without demur;  
And cares nae mair for a holy man  
Than I do for a worthless cur."

"Come here, thou bland and brittle priest,  
And tell to me without delay  
Where you have hid the lord of Ross  
And the lady that came at the break of day."

"No knight or lady, good Lord Douglas,  
Have I beheld since break of morn;  
And I never saw the lord of Ross  
Since the woful day that I was born."

Lord Douglas turned him round about,  
And looked the tinkler in the face;  
Where he beheld a lurking smile,  
And a deevil of a dour grimace.

JAMES HOGG

"How's this, how's this, thou tinkler loun?  
Hast thou presumed to lie on me?"  
"Faith that I have!" the tinkler said,  
"And a right good turn I have done to thee;

"For the lord of Ross and thy own true-love,  
The beauteous Harriet of Thirlestane,  
Rade west away, ere the break of day;  
And you'll never see the dear maid again;

"So I thought it best to bring you here,  
On a wrang scent, of my own accord;  
For had you met the Johnstone clan,  
They wad ha'e made mince-meat of a lord."

At this the Douglas was so wroth  
He wist not what to say or do;  
But he strak the tinkler o'er the croun,  
Till the blood came dreeping ower his brow.

"Beshrew my heart," quo' the tinkler lad,  
"Thou bear'st thee most ungallantly!  
If these are the manners of a lord,  
They are manners that winna gang down wi  
me."

"Hold up thy hand," the Douglas cried,  
"And keep thy distance, tinkler loun!"  
"That I will not," the tinkler said,  
"Though I and my mare should both go  
doun!"

"I have armor on," cried the Lord Douglas,  
"Cuirass and helm, as you may see."

## JAMES HOGG

"The deil me care!" quo' the tinkler lad;  
"I shall have a skelp at them and thee."

"You are not horsed," quo' the Lord Douglas,  
"And no remorse this weapon brooks."  
"Mine's a right good yaud," quo' the tinkler  
lad,  
"And a great deal better nor she looks."

"So stand to thy weapons, thou haughty lord,  
What I have taken I needs must give;  
Thou shalt never strike a tinkler again,  
For the langest day thou hast to live."

Then to it they fell, both sharp and snell,  
Till the fire from both their weapons flew;  
But the very first shock that they met with,  
The Douglas his rashness 'gan to rue.

For though he had on a sark of mail,  
And a cuirass on his breast wore he,  
With a good steel bonnet on his head,  
Yet the blood ran trickling to his knee.

The Douglas sat upright and firm,  
Aye as together their horses ran;  
But the tinkler laid on like a very deil—  
Siccan strokes were never laid on by man.

"Hold up thy hand, thou tinkler loun,"  
Cried the poor priest, with whining din;  
"If thou hurt the brave Lord James Douglas,  
A curse be on thee and all thy kin!"

## JAMES HOGG

"I care no more for Lord James Douglas  
Than Lord James Douglas cares for me;  
But I want to let his proud heart know  
That a tinkler's a man as well as he."

So they fought on, and they fought on,  
Till good Lord Douglas' breath was gone;  
And the tinkler bore him to the ground,  
With rush, with rattle, and with groan.

"O hon! O hon!" cried the proud Douglas,  
"That I this day should have lived to see!  
For sure my honor I have lost,  
And a leader again I can never be!"

"But tell me of thy kith and kin,  
And where was bred thy weapon hand?  
For thou art the wale of tinkler louns  
That ever was born in fair Scotland."

"My name's Jock Johnstone," quo' the wight;  
"I winna keep in my name frae thee;  
And here, tak thou thy sword again,  
And better friends we two shall be."

But the Douglas swore a solemn oath,  
That was a debt he could never owe;  
He would rather die at the back of the dike  
Than owe his sword to a man so low.

"But if thou wilt ride under my banner,  
And bear my livery and my name,  
My right-hand warrior thou shalt be  
And I'll knight thee on the field of fame."

JAMES HOGG

"Woe worth thy wit, good Lord Douglas,  
To think I'd change my trade for thine;  
Far better and wiser would you be,  
To live a journeyman of mine,

"To mend a kettle or a casque,  
Or clout a goodwife's yettlin' pan—  
Upon my life, good Lord Douglas,  
You'd make a noble tinkler-man!

"I would give you a drammock twice a day,  
And sunkets on a Sunday morn,  
And you should be a rare adept  
In steel and copper, brass and horn!

"I'll fight you every day you rise,  
Till you can act the hero's part;  
Therefore, I pray you, think of this,  
And lay it seriously to heart."

The Douglas writhed beneath the lash,  
Answering with an inward curse—  
Like salmon wriggling on a spear,  
That makes his deadly wound the worse.

But up there came two squires renowned;  
In search of Lord Douglas they came;  
And when they saw their master down,  
Their spirits mounted in a flame.

And they flew upon the tinkler wight,  
Like perfect tigers on their prey:  
But the tinkler heaved his trusty sword,  
And made him ready for the fray.

JAMES HOGG

"Come one to one, ye coward knaves,  
Come hand to hand, and steed to steed;  
I would that ye were better men,  
For this is glorious work indeed!"

Before you could have counted twelve,  
The tinkler's wondrous chivalry  
Had both the squires upon the sward,  
And their horses galloping o'er the lea.

The tinkler tied them neck and heel,  
And mony a biting jest gave he:  
"O fie, for shame!" said the tinkler lad;  
"Siccan fighters I did never see!"

He slit one of their bridle reins—  
O, what disgrace the conquered feels!—  
And he skelpit the squires with that good tawse,  
Till the blood ran off at baith their heels.

The Douglas he was forced to laugh  
Till down his cheek the salt tear ran:  
"I think the deevil be come here  
In the likeness of a tinkler man!"

Then he has to Lord Douglas gone,  
And he raised him kindly by the hand,  
And he set him on his gallant steed,  
And bore him away to Henderland:

"Be not cast down, my Lord Douglas,  
Nor writhe beneath a broken bane;  
For the leech's art will mend the part,  
And your honor lost will spring again.



JAMES HOGG

" 'Tis true, Jock Johnstone is my name;  
I'm a right good tinkler, as you see;  
For I can crack a casque betimes,  
Or clout one, as my need may be.

"Jock Johnstone is my name, 'tis true,  
But noble hearts are allied to me;  
For I am the lord of Annandale,  
And a knight and earl as well as thee."

Then Douglas strained the hero's hand,  
And took from it his sword again:  
"Since thou art the lord of Annandale,  
Thou hast eased my heart of meikle pain.

"I might have known thy noble form  
In that disguise thou'rt pleased to wear:  
All Scotland knows thy matchless arm,  
And England by experience dear.

"We have been foes as well as friends,  
And jealous of each other's sway;  
But little can I comprehend  
Thy motive for these pranks to-day.'

"Sooth, my good lord, the truth to tell,  
'Twas I that stole your love away,  
And gave her to the lord of Ross  
An hour before the break of day;

"For the lord of Ross is my brother,  
By all the laws of chivalry;  
And I brought with me a thousand men  
To guard him to my ain country.

## JAMES HOGG

"But I thought meet to stay behind,  
And try your lordship to waylay,  
Resolved to breed some noble sport,  
By leading you so far astray.

"Judging it better some lives to spare—  
Which fancy takes me now and then—  
And settle our quarrel hand to hand,  
Than each with our ten thousand men.

"God send you soon, my Lord Douglas,  
To Border foray sound and hail!  
But never strike a tinkler again,  
If he be a Johnstone of Annandale."

## GEORGE CANNING

ENGLAND, 1770-1827

CANNING is better known to fame as a statesman and orator than poet, though even as a schoolboy at Eton he founded a magazine, *The Microcosm*, for the copyright of which a publisher paid him £50, an unprecedented remuneration for a schoolboy performance of the kind. His genius for satire found expression in a publication called *The Anti-Jacobin*, which lashed the "new philosophy" promulgated by the French Republicans, and in occasional verses such as *The Knife-Grinder*. It was Canning who pronounced the famous dictum, in 1822, that "the New World had been called into existence to redress the balance of the Old, and would in time outweigh and topple over the fabrics of kingcraft."

GEORGE CANNING

*The Knife-Grinder*

A DIALOGUE IN SAPPHICS

FRIEND OF HUMANITY

NEEDY Knife-grinder! whither are you going?  
Rough is the road—your wheel is out of order—  
Bleak blows the blast; your hat has got a hole in't,  
So have your breeches.

"Weary Knife-grinder! little think the proud ones,  
Who in their coaches roll along the turnpike-  
Road, what hard work 'tis crying all day, 'Knives! and  
Scissors to grind O!"

"Tell me, Knife-grinder, how you came to grind knives?  
Did some rich man tyrannically use you?  
Was it the squire? or parson of the parish?  
Or the attorney?"

"Was it the squire, for killing of his game? or  
Covetous parson, for his tithes distraining?  
Or roguish lawyer, made you lose your little  
All in a law-suit?"

"(Have you not read the *Rights of Man*, by Tom  
Paine?)  
Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids,  
Ready to fall, as soon as you have told your  
Pitiful story."

## GEORGE CANNING

### KNIFE-GRINDER

"Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir.  
Only last night, a-drinking at the Chequers,  
This poor old hat and breeches, as you see, were  
Torn in a scuffle.

"Constables came up for to take me into  
Custody; they took me before the justice;  
Justice Oldmixon put me in the parish  
Stocks for a vagrant.

"I should be glad to drink your Honor's health in  
A pot of beer, if you will give me sixpence;  
But for my part, I never love to meddle  
With politics, sir."

### FRIEND OF HUMANITY

"I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damned first—  
Wretch! whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance—  
Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,  
Spiritless outcast!"

*(Kicks the Knife-Grinder, overturns his wheel, and exit in a transport of Republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy.)*

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770-1850

THE work of Wordsworth is singularly unequal. When at his best, as in the great *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, *Laodamia*, passages in *The Excursion*, and some of his short pieces, especially his sonnets—in these he rises to heights of noble inspiration and splendor of language. But his poetic fire had to be at fusing point to burst through his natural tendency to prolixity and even dulness. His extraordinary lack of humor led him into a frequent puerility of subject and a mawkish handling that provoked not unjust ridicule, and that long delayed the general recognition of his genius.

As his friend and great appraiser, Coleridge, observed, Wordsworth in his great moments had "the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word." Under inspiration he does indeed shed upon these mortal scenes:

"The gleam,  
The light that never was on sea or land,  
The consecration, and the poet's dream."

Wordsworth frequently has marvellous facility of phrase, graphic power of describing natural appearances and effects, and the most ennobling views of life and duty. His most distinguishing characteristic, however, is his sense of the mystic relations between man and nature. He does not see his landscape in minute detail of form and color: his imagination is always interpreting to his emotions the meaning of what he beholds.

His influence upon contemporary and succeeding thought in literature and in life has been profound and lasting—a Sabbath influence. There are moments when the flash

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

of the passing God is upon his soul. Then it is that he rises into his glory. There are poets who outsoar his summits, but there are none who catch just the light that falls from his rift of sky.

### *From "Lucy"*

#### II.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the springs of Dove,  
A Maid whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye!  
Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be;  
But she is in her grave, and oh,  
The difference to me!

#### IV.

Three years she grew in sun and shower;  
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower  
On earth was never sown;  
This child I to myself will take;  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A lady of my own.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear  
To her; and she shall lean her ear  
In many a secret place

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,  
Shall pass into her face.'

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—  
How soon my Lucy's race was run!  
She died, and left to me  
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;  
The memory of what has been,  
And never more will be.

*Upon Westminster Bridge*

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth like a garment wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

*To Toussaint l'Ouverture*

TOUSSAINT! the most unhappy man of men!  
Whether the whistling rustic tend his plow  
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now  
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

O miserable chieftain! where and when  
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou  
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:  
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,  
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind  
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies:  
There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

*From "England, 1802"*

i

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look  
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,  
To think that now our life is only drest  
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,  
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook  
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest;  
The wealthiest man among us is the best:  
No grandeur now in nature or in book  
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
This is idolatry; and these we adore:  
Plain living and high thinking are no more:  
The homely beauty of the good old cause  
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
And pure religion breathing household laws.

ii

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
England hath need of thee: she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,



## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:  
O raise us up, return to us again,  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power!  
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

### *The Solitary Reaper*

**B**EHOLD her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland Lass!  
Reaping and singing by herself;  
Stop here, or gently pass!  
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
And sings a melancholy strain;  
O listen! for the Vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian sands:  
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird.  
Breaking the silence of the seas  
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—  
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago:  
Or is it some more humble lay,  
Familiar matter of to-day?  
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,  
That has been, and may be again?

What'er the theme, the maiden sang  
As if her song could have no ending;  
I saw her singing at her work,  
And o'er the sickle bending;—  
I listened, motionless and still;  
And, as I mounted up the hill  
The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.

### *Perfect Woman*

*"The germ of this poem," Wordsworth tells us, "was four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious."*

SHE was a phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
A lovely apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament;  
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;  
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;  
A dancing shape, an image gay,  
To haunt, to startle and waylay.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I saw her upon nearer view,  
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin liberty;  
A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet;  
A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food;  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine;  
A being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A traveller betwixt life and death;  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill:  
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort and command;  
And yet a Spirit still, and bright  
With something of angelic light.

### *Daffodils*

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills.  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed— and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

### *Ode to Duty*

*This fine poem has a slight fault in the first line—a mixed metaphor. A voice has an echo, but hardly a daughter.*

**S**TERN Daughter of the Voice of God!  
O Duty! if that name thou love  
Who art a light to guide, a rod  
To check the erring, and reprove;  
Thou, who art victory and law  
When empty terrors overawe;  
From vain temptations dost set free;  
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye  
Be on them; who, in love and truth,

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Where no misgiving is, rely  
Upon the genial sense of youth:  
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;  
Who do thy work, and know it not:  
Oh! if through confidence misplaced  
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them  
cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,  
And happy will our nature be,  
When love is an unerring light,  
And joy its own security.  
And they a blissful course may hold  
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,  
Live in the spirit of this creed;  
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;  
No sport of every random gust,  
Yet being to myself a guide,  
Too blindly have reposed my trust;  
And oft, when in my heart was heard  
Thy timely mandate, I deferred  
The task, in smoother walks to stray;  
But thee I now would serve more strictly if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,  
Or strong compunction in me wrought,  
I supplicate for thy control;  
But in the quietness of thought:  
Me this unchartered freedom tires;  
I feel the weight of chance-desires:  
My hopes no more must change their name,  
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace:  
Nor know we any thing so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face:  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds  
And fragrance in thy footing treads:  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;  
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh  
and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!  
I call thee: I myself commend  
Unto thy guidance from this hour;  
Oh, let my weakness have an end!  
Give unto me, made lowly wise,  
The spirit of self-sacrifice:  
The confidence of reason give,  
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

*The Rainbow*

MY heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die!

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

### *The Sonnet*

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned.  
Mindless of its just honors; with this key  
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody  
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;  
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;  
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;  
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf  
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned  
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,  
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land  
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp  
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

### *The World*

THE world is too much with us: late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

### *Ode*

#### INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Of this Ode, Wordsworth says, "I do not profess to give a literal representation of the state of the affections and of the moral being in childhood. I record my own feelings at that time—my absolute spirituality, my 'all-soulness,' if I may so speak. At that time I could not believe that I should lie down quietly in the grave, and that my body would moulder into dust."*

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and  
stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,  
And lovely is the rose;  
The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare;  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair;  
The sunshine is a glorious birth;  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.



## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,  
And while the young lambs bound  
As to the tabor's sound,  
To me alone there came a thought of grief:  
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
And I again am strong:  
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;  
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;  
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,  
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,  
And all the earth is gay;  
Land and sea  
Give themselves up to jollity,  
And with the heart of May  
Doth every beast keep holiday;  
Thou Child of Joy,  
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy  
Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call  
Ye to each other make; I see  
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;  
My heart is at your festival,  
My head hath its coronal,  
The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.  
O evil day! if I were sullen  
While Earth herself is adorning,  
This sweet May-morning,  
And the children are culling  
On every side,  
In a thousand valleys far and wide,  
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,  
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm—  
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!  
—But there's a tree, of many, one,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A single field which I have looked upon,  
Both of them speak of something that is gone:  
    The pansy at my feet  
    Doth the same tale repeat:  
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
    Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
    And cometh from afar:  
    Not in entire forgetfulness,  
    And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
    From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
    Upon the growing Boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
    He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
    Must travel, still is Nature's priest,  
    And by the vision splendid  
    Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;  
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,  
And, even with something of a mother's mind,  
    And no unworthy aim,  
    The homely nurse doth all she can  
To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,  
    Forget the glories he hath known,  
And that imperial palace whence he came.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,  
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!  
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,  
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
With light upon him from his father's eyes!  
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,  
Some fragment from his dream of human life,  
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;  
    A wedding or a festival,  
    A mourning or a funeral;  
    And this hath now his heart,  
And unto this he frames his song:  
    Then will he fit his tongue  
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;  
    But it will not be long  
    Ere this be thrown aside,  
    And with new joy and pride  
The little actor cons another part;  
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"  
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,  
That Life brings with her in her equipage;  
    As if his whole vocation  
    Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
    Thy soul's immensity;  
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—  
    Mighty prophet! Seer blest!  
    On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;  
Thou, over whom thy Immortality

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Broods like the Day, a master o'er a slave,  
A presence which is not to be put by;  
    To whom the grave  
Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight  
    Of day or the warm light,  
A place of thought where we in waiting lie;  
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might  
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,  
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke  
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,  
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?  
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,  
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

    O joy! that in our embers  
    Is something that doth live,  
    That nature yet remembers  
    What was so fugitive!  
The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benediction: not indeed  
For, that which is most worthy to be blest—  
Delight and liberty, the simple creed  
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,  
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:  
    Not for these I raise  
    The song of thanks and praise;  
    But for those obstinate questionings  
    Of sense and outward things,  
    Fallings from us, vanishings;  
    Blank misgivings of a Creature  
Moving about in worlds not realized,  
High instincts before which our mortal Nature  
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

But for those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,  
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;  
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,  
To perish never:  
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,  
Nor Man nor Boy,  
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
Can utterly abolish or destroy!  
Hence in a season of calm weather  
Though inland far we be,  
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither,  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!  
And let the young lambs bound  
As to the tabor's sound!  
We in thought will join your throng,  
Ye that pipe and ye that play,  
Ye that through your hearts to-day  
Feel the gladness of the May!  
What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now for ever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills and Groves,  
Forebode not any severing of our loves!  
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;  
I only have relinquished one delight  
To live beneath your more habitual sway.  
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,  
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;  
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day  
Is lovely yet;  
The clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober coloring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;  
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.  
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

### *To the Cuckoo*

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,  
I hear thee and rejoice.  
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,  
Or but a wandering Voice?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

While I am lying on the grass  
Thy twofold shout I hear,  
From hill to hill it seems to pass,  
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,  
Of sunshine and of flowers,  
Thou bringest unto me a tale  
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!  
Even yet thou art to me  
No bird, but an invisible thing,  
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days  
I listened to; that Cry  
Which made me look a thousand ways  
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove  
Through woods and on the green;  
And thou were still a hope, a love;  
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;  
Can lie upon the plain  
And listen, till I do beget  
That golden time again.

O blessèd bird! the earth we pace  
Again appears to be  
An unsubstantial, faery place;  
That is fit home for Thee!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

*From "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above  
Tintern Abbey"*

*Wordsworth says of this poem, which was first published in "The Lyrical Ballads", in 1798: "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."*

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the  
length  
Of five long winters! and again I hear  
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
With a soft inland murmur. . . .  
These beauteous forms,  
Through a long absence, have not been to me  
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:  
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din  
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,  
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;  
And passing even into my purer mind,  
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too  
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,  
As have no slight or trivial influence  
On that best portion of a good man's life,  
His little, nameless, unremembered acts  
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,  
To them I may have owed another gift,  
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,  
In which the burden of the mystery,



## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on,  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things. . . .

For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
Of eye, and ear—both what they half create,  
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
In nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being. . . .

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her: 'tis her privilege,  
Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
From joy to joy; for she can so inform  
The mind that is within us, so impress  
With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,  
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

### *Yew-Trees*

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,  
Which to this day stands single, in the midst  
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;  
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands  
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched  
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea  
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,  
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.  
Of vast circumference and gloom profound  
This solitary Tree! a living thing  
Produced too slowly ever to decay;  
Of form and aspect too magnificent  
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note  
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,  
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;  
Huge trunks; and each particular trunk a growth  
Of intertwined fibres serpentine  
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;  
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks  
That threaten the profane—a pillared shade,  
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,  
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged  
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof  
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked  
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes  
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope;  
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton  
And Time the Shadow—there to celebrate,  
As in a natural temple scattered o'er  
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,  
United worship; or in mute repose  
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood  
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

SCOTLAND, 1771-1832

THE year 1825 saw Scott at a pinnacle of fame such as no other British man of letters has ever attained during his lifetime. He had for a while (between the publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in 1805, and *The Lady of the Lake*, in 1810) been the most admired poet of his day, and though latterly eclipsed by Byron, he still retained fame as a poet. But his apotheosis came through the publication of the *Waverley Novels*. Then, in 1826, the publishing and printing firms with which he had been connected went into bankruptcy, and Scott found himself at 55 failing in health and involved in liabilities amounting to £130,000. Never was adversity more manfully and gallantly met. He deliberately set himself to pay off his debts with his pen, and his efforts were crowned with marvellous success.

Scott's poetry, though not of a lofty imaginative order, has ever appealed most strongly to youthful and high-hearted readers. He is not the poet, and never can be, of those who love the Keatsian and Shelleyan beauty. The student and the artist remember his tales in verse as cherished enchantments of their youth, but do not recur to them. However, he must be recognized as the great modern troubadour, a high-hearted minstrel.

### *O Woman! In Our Hours of Ease*

O WOMAN! in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light quivering aspen made;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou!

SIR WALTER SCOTT

*Lochinvar*

OH! young Lochinvar is come out of the west,  
Through all the wide Border his steed was the  
best;

And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,  
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.  
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,  
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,  
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;  
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate  
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:  
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war  
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,  
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:  
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,  
For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,  
"Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,  
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;  
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—  
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,  
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.  
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,  
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,  
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.  
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,

SIR WALTER SCOTT

With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.  
He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar—  
“Now tread we a measure!” said young Lochinar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,  
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;  
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,  
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and  
plume;  
And the bride-maidens whispered, “’Twere better by  
far  
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.”

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,  
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood  
near;  
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,  
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!  
“She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;  
They’ll have fleet steeds that follow,” quoth young  
Lochinvar.

There was mounting ’mong Græmes of the Netherby  
clan;  
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they  
ran:  
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,  
But the lost bride of Netherby ne’er did they see.  
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,  
Have ye e’er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

SIR WALTER SCOTT

*Brignall Banks*

*During the composition of "Rokeby" Scott wrote to a friend: "There are two or three songs, and particularly one in praise of Brignall banks, which I trust you will like—because, entre nous, I like them myself. One of them is a little dashing banditti song, called and entitled 'Allen-a-Dale.'"*

O H, BRIGNALL banks are wild and fair,  
And Greta woods are green,  
And you may gather garlands there  
Would grace a summer queen.  
And as I rode by Dalton-hall,  
Beneath the turrets high,  
A maiden on the castle wall  
Was singing merrily:  
"Oh, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,  
And Greta woods are green;  
I'd rather rove with Edmund there  
Than reign our English queen."

"If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,  
To leave both tower and town,  
Thou first must guess what life lead we  
That dwell by dale and down.  
And if thou canst that riddle read,  
As read full well you may,  
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,  
As blithe as Queen of May."  
Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,  
And Greta woods are green;  
I'd rather rove with Edmund there  
Than reign our English queen."

SIR WALTER SCOTT

"I read you, by your bugle horn,  
And by your palfrey good,  
I read you for a ranger sworn  
To keep the king's greenwood."  
"A ranger, lady, winds his horn,  
And 'tis at peep of light;  
His blast is heard at merry morn,  
And mine at dead of night."  
Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,  
And Greta woods are gay;  
I would I were with Edmund there,  
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnished brand and musketoon  
So gallantly you come,  
I read you for a bold dragoon,  
That lists the tuck of drum."  
"I list no more the tuck of drum,  
No more the trumpet hear;  
But when the beetle sounds his hum,  
My comrades take the spear.  
And oh, though Brignall banks be fair,  
And Greta woods be gay,  
Yet mickle must the maiden dare  
Would reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,  
A nameless death I'll die;  
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead  
Were better mate than I!  
And when I'm with my comrades met  
Beneath the greenwood bough,  
What once we were we all forget,  
Nor think what we are now.



SIR WALTER SCOTT

Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,  
And Greta woods are green,  
And you may gather garlands there  
Would grace a summer queen."

*Allen-a-Dale*

**A** LLEN-A-DALE has no fagot for burning,  
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,  
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,  
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.  
Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!  
And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,  
And he views his domains upon Arkindale side.  
The mere for his net and the land for his game,  
The chase for the wild and the park for the tame:  
Yet the fish of the lake and the deer of the vale  
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,  
Though his spur be as sharp and his blade be as bright;  
Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,  
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;  
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,  
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;  
The mother, she asked of his household and home:  
"Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,  
My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shows gallanter still;  
'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale  
And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-Dale.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The father was steel and the mother was stone;  
They lifted the latch and they bade him be gone;  
But loud on the morrow their wail and their cry:  
He had laughed on the lass with his bonny black eye,  
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,  
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-dale!

*Soldier, Rest! Thy Warfare O'er*

FROM "THE LADY OF THE LAKE"

SOLDIER, rest! thy warfare o'er,  
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;  
Dream of battled fields no more,  
Days of danger, nights of waking.  
In our isle's enchanted hall,  
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,  
Fairy strains of music fall,  
Every sense in slumber dewing.  
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,  
Dream of fighting fields no more;  
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,  
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,  
Armor's clang, or war-steed champing,  
Trump nor pibroch summon here  
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.  
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come  
At the daybreak from the fallow,  
And the bittern sound his drum,  
Booming from the sedgy shallow.  
Ruder sounds shall none be near,  
Guards nor warders challenge here,

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,  
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;  
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,  
Dream not, with the rising sun,  
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.  
Sleep! the deer is in his den;  
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying:  
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen  
How thy gallant steed lay dying.  
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;  
Think not of the rising sun,  
For at dawning to assail ye  
Here no bugles sound reveillé.

*Hail to the Chief, Who in Triumph  
Advances!*

FROM "THE LADY OF THE LAKE"

HAIL to the Chief who in triumph advances!  
Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine!  
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,  
Flourish the shelter and grace of our line!  
Heaven send it happy dew,  
Earth lend it sap anew,  
Gayly to burgeon and broadly to grow,  
While every Highland glen  
Sends our shout back again,  
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!  
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!

SIR WALTER SCOTT

O that the rosebud that graces yon islands  
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!  
O that some seedling gem,  
Worthy such noble stem  
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!  
Loud should Clan-Alpine then  
Ring from her deepest glen,  
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

*Sound, Sound the Clarion*

SOUND, sound the clarion, fill the fife!  
To all the sensual world proclaim,  
One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name.

*Proud Maisie*

PROUD Maisie is in the wood,  
Walking so early;  
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,  
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,  
When shall I marry me?"  
"When six braw gentlemen  
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,  
Birdie, say truly?"  
"The grey-headed sexton  
That delves the grave duly.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone  
Shall light thee steady;  
The owl from the steeple sing  
Welcome, proud lady!"

*Patriotism*

BREATHES there the man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
"This is my own, my native land!"  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned  
As home his footsteps he hath turned  
From wandering on a foreign strand?  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
For him no minstrel raptures swell;  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentred all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored and unsung.

*Pitt and Fox*

*Referring, of course, to the eminent British statesmen, William Pitt (the Younger) and Charles James Fox.*

NEVER held marble in its trust  
Of two such wondrous men the dust.  
With more than mortal powers endowed.  
How high they soared above the crowd!

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

Theirs was no common party race,  
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;  
Like fabled gods, their mighty war  
Shook realms and nations in its jar;  
Beneath each banner proud to stand,  
Looked up the noblest of the land,  
Till through the British world were known  
The names of PITT and FOX alone.  
Spells of such force no wizard grave  
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,  
Though his could drain the ocean dry,  
And force the planets from the sky.  
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,  
The wine of life is on the lees.  
Genius and taste and talent gone,  
For ever tombed beneath the stone,  
Where—taming thought to human pride  
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.  
Drop upon FOX's grave the tear,  
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;  
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,  
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.  
The solemn echo seems to cry:  
"Here let their discord with them die.  
Speak not for those a separate doom  
Whom fate made brothers in the tomb;  
But search the land of living men,  
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

SIR WALTER SCOTT

*County Guy*

AH! County Guy, the hour is nigh,  
The sun has left the lea,  
The orange-flower perfumes the bower,  
The breeze is on the sea.  
The lark, his lay who trilled all day,  
Sits hushed his partner nigh;  
Breeze, bird and flower, confess the hour,  
But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,  
Her shepherd's suit to hear;  
To beauty shy, by lattice high,  
Sings high-born Cavalier.  
The star of Love, all stars above,  
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;  
And high and low the influence know—  
But where is County Guy?

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

ENGLAND, 1772-1834

As a poet of the first order, the place of Coleridge is immovable. Because of some half dozen miracles in poetry, his place is indeed "high among the highest of all time", says Swinburne, adding: "An age that should forget or neglect Coleridge might neglect or forget any poet that ever lived. . . . That may be said of him which can hardly be said of any but the greatest among men; that come what may to the world in course of time, it will never see his place filled. . . . For height and perfection of imaginative quality he is the greatest of lyric poets."

Ten years after the death of Coleridge, Leigh Hunt observed: "His poetry is so beautiful, and it was so quietly content with its beauty, making no call on the critics, and receiving hardly any notice, that people are only now beginning to awake to a full sense of its merits. Of pure poetry, strictly so called, consisting of nothing but its essential self, without conventional and perishing helps, he was the greatest master of his time."

About 1796 Coleridge contracted the habit of taking laudanum, which had such disastrous effects upon his character and powers of will. Coincidentally *Poems on Various Subjects* appeared, and a little later his *Ode to the Departing Year*. At this period he lived in Somerset, with William Wordsworth for a neighbor. There Coleridge wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, the first part of *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*; and there he joined with Wordsworth in producing their epoch-making *Lyrical Ballads*.



## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

In 1798, Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood, the great pottery makers and patrons of arts and letters, gave Coleridge an annuity of £150 on condition that he devote himself to literature. His last poetic production of consequence was the second part of *Christabel*, written in 1800. Soon after this his health failed, and, whether as the cause or the consequence of his suffering, he became a slave to opium. Thereafter he drifted from place to place, living with various friends. *Christabel* and *Kubla Kahn* were published in 1816, followed in 1817 by *Biographia Literaria*, *Sybilline Leaves* and an autobiography. His life thenceforth was a splendid wreck.

### *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

*I give here the text of 1829 of this astonishing production. It is Coleridge's final version, the result of several revisions, most of which are improvements over the first text of 1798. Instead of the third stanza, for instance, the original text has the two following:*

*But still he holds the wedding-guest—  
"There was a Ship," quoth he—  
"Nay, if thou'st got a laughsome tale,  
Marinere! come with me."*

*He holds him with his skinny hand,  
Quoth he, "There was a Ship—"  
"Now get thee hence, thou gray-beard Loon!  
Or my Staff shall make thee skip."*

*The poem relates how a ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the ancient Mariner came back to his own country.*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

PART I

**I**T is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,  
And I am next of kin;  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
"There was a ship," quoth he.  
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"  
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three years' child:  
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:  
He cannot choose but hear;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner  
tells how the  
ship sailed  
southward  
with a good  
wind and  
fair weather,  
till it  
reached  
the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,  
Out of the sea came he!  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Higher and higher every day,  
Till over the mast at noon—"The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
Red as a rose is she:  
Nodding their heads before her goes  
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest  
heareth  
the bridal  
music; but  
the Mariner  
continueth  
his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
Yet he cannot choose but hear;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he  
Was tyrannous and strong:  
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
And chased us south along.

The ship  
drawn by  
a storm  
toward the  
South Pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,  
As who pursued with yell and blow  
Still treads the shadow of his foe,  
And forward bends his head,  
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,  
And it grew wondrous cold:  
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
As green as emerald.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The land of  
ice, and  
of fearful  
sounds,  
where no  
living thing  
was to be  
seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts  
Did send a dismal sheen:  
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—  
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around:  
It cracked and growled, and roared and  
howled,  
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great  
sea-bird,  
called the  
Albatross,  
came  
through the  
snow-fog,  
and was re-  
ceived with  
great joy  
and hos-  
pitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,  
Through the fog it came;  
As if it had been a Christian soul,  
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
And round and round it flew.  
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;  
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the  
Albatross  
proveth a  
bird of good  
omen, and  
followeth  
the ship as  
it returneth  
northward  
through fog  
and floating  
ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind;  
The Albatross did follow,  
And every day, for food or play,  
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,  
It perched for vespers nine;  
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke  
white,  
Glimmered the white moonshine."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,  
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!  
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-  
bow  
I shot the Albatross."

The ancient  
Mariner in-  
hospitably  
killeth the  
pious bird  
of good  
omen.

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:  
Out of the sea came he,  
Still hid in mist, and on the left  
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet bird did follow,  
Nor any day for food or play  
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work 'em woe:  
For all averred I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow.  
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,  
That made the breeze to blow!

His ship-  
mates cry out  
against the  
ancient Mari-  
ner for kill-  
ing the bird  
of good luck.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist:  
Then all averred I had killed the bird  
That brought the fog and mist.  
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,  
That bring the fog and mist.

But when the  
fog cleared  
off, they  
justify the  
same, and  
thus make  
themselves  
accomplices  
in the crime.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The fair  
breeze con-  
tinues; the  
ship enters  
the Pacific  
Ocean, and  
sails north-  
ward, even  
till it reaches  
the Line.

The ship hath  
been suddenly  
becalmed.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free;  
We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
'Twas sad as sad could be;  
And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,  
The bloody Sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand,  
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Al-  
batross be-  
gins to be  
avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!  
That ever this should be!  
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout  
The death-fires danced at night;  
The water, like a witch's oils,  
Burnt green and blue and white.

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And some in dreams assurèd were  
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;  
Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had  
followed  
them; one of  
the invisible  
inhabitants  
of this planet,  
neither de-  
parted souls  
nor angels;

concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,  
Was withered at the root:  
We could not speak, no more than if  
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young!  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung."

The shipmates  
in their sore  
distress,  
would fain  
throw the  
whole guilt  
on the ancient  
Mariner: in  
sign whereof  
they hang the  
dead sea-bird  
round his  
neck.

### PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat  
Was parched, and glazed each eye.  
A weary time! a weary time!  
How glazed each weary eye!  
When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

The ancient  
Mariner be-  
holdeth a sign  
in the ele-  
ment afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist;  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!  
And still it neared and neared:  
As if it dodged a water-sprite,  
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer  
approach, it  
seemeth him  
to be a ship;  
and at a dear  
ransom he  
freeth his  
speech from  
the bonds of  
thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips  
baked,  
We could nor laugh nor wail;  
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!  
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,  
And cried, A sail! a sail!

A flash of  
joy.

With throats unslaked, with black lips  
baked,  
Agape they heard me call:  
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,  
And all at once their breath drew in,  
As they were drinking all.

And horror  
follows. For  
can it be a  
ship that  
comes on-  
ward without  
wind or tide?

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!  
Hither to work us weal—  
Without a breeze, without a tide,  
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all aflame,  
The day was wellnigh done!  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad, bright Sun;  
When that strange shape drove suddenly  
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth  
him but the  
skeleton of  
a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars  
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!),  
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered  
With broad and burning face.



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)  
How fast she nears and nears!  
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,  
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun  
Did peer, as through a grate?  
And is that Woman all her crew?  
Is that a Death? and are there two?  
Is Death that Woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold:  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,  
And the twain were casting dice:  
"The game is done! I've won! I've won!"  
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out,  
At one stride comes the dark:  
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,  
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!  
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
My life-blood seemed to sip!  
The stars were dim, and thick the night,  
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed  
white;  
From the sails the dew did drip—

And its ribs  
are seen as  
bars on the  
face of the  
setting Sun.  
The Spectre-  
Woman and  
her Death-  
mate, and no  
other, on  
board the  
skeleton ship.  
Like vessel,  
like crew!

Death and  
Life-in-Death  
have diced  
for the ship's  
crew, and she  
(the latter)  
winneth the  
ancient  
Mariner.

No twilight  
within the  
courts of the  
Sun.

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

At the rising of the Moon, Till clomb above the eastern bar  
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star  
Within the nether tip.

One after another, One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
Too quick for groan or sigh,  
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead. Four times fifty living men  
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),  
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner. The souls did from their bodies fly—  
They fled to bliss or woe!  
And every soul, it passed me by  
Like the whizz of my crossbow!"

### PART IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him. "I fear thee, ancient Mariner!  
I fear thy skinny hand!  
And thou art long, and lank and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand."<sup>1</sup>

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,  
And thy skinny hand so brown."—

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance. "Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!  
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide, wide sea!

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge says that for the last two lines here he was indebted to Wordsworth.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!  
And they all dead did lie;  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on, and so did I.  
I looked upon the rotting sea,  
And drew my eyes away:  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

He despiseth  
the creatures  
of the calm.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;  
But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
My heart as dry as dust.

And envieth  
that they  
should live,  
and so many  
lie dead.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
And the balls like pulses beat;  
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the  
sky,  
Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
Nor rot nor reek did they:  
The look with which they looked on me  
Had never passed away.

But the curse  
liveth for him  
in the eye of  
the dead men.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell  
A spirit from on high;  
But oh! more horrible than that  
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!  
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
And yet I could not die.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

In his loneli-  
ness and  
fixedness he  
yearneth  
towards the  
journeying  
Moon, and

the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and every-  
where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest  
and their native country and their own natural homes, which  
they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and  
yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide:  
Softly she was going up,  
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,  
Like April hoar-frost spread;  
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
The charmed water burnt away  
A still and awful red.

By the light  
of the Moon  
he beholdeth  
God's crea-  
tures of the  
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
I watched the water-snakes:  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared, the elfish light  
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
I watched their rich attire:  
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam; and every track  
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty  
and their  
happiness.

He blesseth  
them in his  
heart.

O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware:  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The selfsame moment I could pray;  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off, and sank  
Like lead into the sea."

The spell  
begins to  
break.

PART V

"O sleep! it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole!  
To Mary Queen the praise be given!  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,  
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;  
And when I awoke, it rained.

By grace of  
the holy  
Mother, the  
ancient  
Mariner is  
refreshed  
with rain.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:  
I was so light—almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessèd ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:  
It did not come anear;  
But with its sound it shook the sails,  
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth  
sounds and  
seeth strange  
sights and  
commotions in  
the sky and  
the element.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The upper air burst into life;  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen;  
To and fro they were hurried about!  
And to and fro, and in and out,  
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
And the sails did sigh like sedge;  
And the rain poured down from one black  
cloud;  
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
The Moon was at its side;  
Like waters shot from some high crag,  
The lightning fell with never a jag,  
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of  
the ship's  
crew are in-  
spired; and  
the ship  
moves on;

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
Yet now the ship moved on!  
Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;  
It had been strange, even in a dream,  
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;  
Yet never a breeze up-blew;  
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
Where they were wont to do;  
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
We were a ghastly crew.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The body of my brother's son  
Stood by me, knee to knee:  
The body and I pulled at one rope,  
But he said naught to me."

But not by  
the souls of  
the men, nor  
by demons of  
earth or mid-  
dle air, but  
by a blessed  
troop of an-  
gelic spirits,  
sent down by  
the invocation  
of the guard-  
ian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"  
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest:  
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,  
Which to their corse came again,  
But a troop of spirits blest:<sup>1</sup>

For when it dawned—they dropped their  
arms,  
And clustered round the mast;  
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their  
mouths,  
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
Then darted to the Sun;  
Slowly the sounds came back again,  
Now mixed, now one by one.

<sup>1</sup> It seems to me here that Coleridge misses a fine opportunity for dramatic terror. These mariners might better be the dead come back—not "a troop of spirits blest." It may be thought presumptuous to revise the work of a master; nevertheless, even a mouse has sometimes the daring to nibble at great foundations. Here is my suggested change—my "nibble" at this Coleridge pillar:

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"  
Yes, strange it was indeed:  
They were the souls that had fled in pain,  
Who to their bodies came again—  
Came in the hour of need—  
Came in the dying of my hopes  
To help me pull the straining ropes.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
I heard the skylark sing;  
Sometimes all little birds that are,  
How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments  
Now like a lonely flute;  
And now it is an angel's song,  
That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on  
A pleasant noise till noon,  
A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
Yet never a breeze did breathe:  
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,  
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome  
Spirit from  
the South  
Pole carries  
on the ship as  
far as the  
Line, in obe-  
dience to the  
angelic troop,  
but still  
requireth  
vengeance

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
From the land of mist and snow,  
The Spirit slid: and it was he  
That made the ship to go.  
The sails at noon left off their tune  
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,  
Had fixed her to the ocean;  
But in a minute she 'gan stir,  
With a short uneasy motion—



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Backwards and forwards half her length  
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
She made a sudden bound;  
It flung the blood into my head,  
And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
I have not to declare;  
But ere my living life returned,  
I heard, and in my soul discerned  
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'is this the man?  
By Him who died on cross,  
With his cruel bow he laid full low  
The harmless Albatross.

The Spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow,  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew:  
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.'

The Polar  
Spirit's fel-  
low-demons,  
the invisible  
inhabitants of  
the element,  
take part in  
his wrong;  
and two of  
them relate,  
one to the  
other, that  
penance long  
and heavy for  
the ancient  
Mariner hath  
been accorded  
to the Polar  
Spirit, who  
returneth  
southward.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

PART VI

*First Voice:*

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,  
Thy soft response renewing—  
What makes that ship drive on so fast?  
What is the Ocean doing?'

*Second Voice:*

'Still as a slave before his lord,  
The Ocean hath no blast;  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;  
For she guides him smooth or grim.  
See, brother, see! how graciously  
She looked down on him.'

The Mariner  
hath been cast  
into a trance;  
for the angelic  
power causeth  
the vessel to  
drive north-  
ward faster  
than human  
life could  
endure.

*First Voice:*

'But why drives on that ship so fast,  
Without or wave or wind?'

*Second Voice:*

'The air is cut away before,  
And closes from behind.

'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!  
Or we shall be belated:  
For slow and slow that ship will go,  
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

I woke, and we were sailing on  
As in a gentle weather:  
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;  
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

All stood together on the deck,  
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:  
All fixed on me their stony eyes,  
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
Had never passed away:  
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,  
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more  
I viewed the ocean green,  
And looked far forth, yet little saw  
Of what had else been seen—

The curse is finally expiated.

Like one that on a lonesome road  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turned round, walks on,  
And turns no more his head;  
Because he knows a frightful fiend  
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
Nor sound nor motion made:  
Its path was not upon the sea,  
In ripple or in shade.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
Like a meadow-gale of spring—  
It mingled strangely with my fears,  
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,  
Yet she sailed softly too:  
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—  
On me alone it blew.

And the an-  
cient Mariner  
beholdeth his  
native  
country.

O dream of joy! is this indeed  
The lighthouse top I see?  
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?  
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,  
And I with sobs did pray—  
O let me be awake, my God!  
Or let me sleep away.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,  
So smoothly it was strewn!  
And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less  
That stands above the rock:  
The moonlight steeped in silentness  
The steady weathercock.

The angelic  
spirits leave  
the dead  
bodies,

And the bay was white with silent light  
Till rising from the same,  
Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
In crimson colors came.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A little distance from the prow  
Those crimson shadows were:  
I turned my eyes upon the deck—  
O Christ! what saw I there!

And appear  
in their own  
forms of light.

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
And, by the holy rood!  
A man all light, a seraph-man,  
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:  
It was a heavenly sight!  
They stood as signals to the land,  
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,  
No voice did they impart—  
No voice; but O, the silence sank  
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,  
I heard the Pilot's cheer;  
My head was turned perforce away,  
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,  
I heard them coming fast:  
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy  
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:  
It is the Hermit good!  
He singeth loud his godly hymns  
That he makes in the wood.

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away  
The Albatross's blood."

### PART VII

The Hermit  
of the Wood.

"This hermit good lives in that wood  
Which slopes down to the sea.  
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!  
He loves to talk with marineres  
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—  
He hath a cushion plump:  
It is the moss that wholly hides  
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,  
'Why, this is strange, I trow!  
Where are those lights so many and fair,  
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth  
the ship with  
wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—  
'And they answered not our cheer!  
The planks look warped! and see those sails,  
How thin they are and sere!  
I never saw aught like to them,  
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
My forest-brook along;  
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,  
And the owl whoops to the wolf below,  
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—'  
(The Pilot made reply)  
'I am a-feared.'—'Push on, push on!'  
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,  
But I nor spake nor stirred:  
The boat came close beneath the ship,  
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,  
Still louder and more dread:  
It reached the ship, it split the bay;  
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,  
Which sky and ocean smote,  
Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
My body lay afloat;  
But swift as dreams, myself I found  
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
The boat spun round and round;  
And all was still, save that the hill  
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked  
And fell down in a fit:  
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars; the Pilot's boy,  
Who now doth crazy go,  
Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
His eyes went to and fro.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see  
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own cuntry,  
I stood on the firm land!  
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient  
Mariner  
earnestly en-  
treateth the  
Hermit to  
shrieve him;  
and the pen-  
ance of life  
falls on him.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'  
The Hermit crossed his brow.  
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—  
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
With a woful agony,  
Which forced me to begin my tale;  
And then it left me free.

And ever  
and anon  
throughout  
his future life  
an agony  
constraineth  
him to travel  
from land to  
land;

Since, then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns:  
And till my ghastly tale is told,  
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;  
I have strange power of speech;  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me:  
To him my tale I teach.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word *teach* seems a forced word in this place—not an inevitable rhyme. Every rhyme should seem to be exactly suited to the place. Again I venture to suggest a possible change in the Coleridge diction:

I pass like night from land to land:  
My words have power and spell.  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me:  
To him my tale I tell.



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

What loud uproar bursts from that door!  
The wedding-guests are there;  
But in the garden-bower the bride  
And the bride-maids singing are:  
And hark, the little vesper bell,  
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been  
Alone on a wide, wide sea:  
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself  
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
'Tis sweeter far to me,  
To walk together to the kirk  
With a goodly company!

To walk together to the kirk,  
And all together pray,  
While each to his great Father bends,  
Old men, and babes and loving friends,  
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell  
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!  
He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

And to teach,  
by his own  
example,  
love and rev-  
erence to  
all things  
that God  
made and  
loveth.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest  
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn:  
A sadder and a wiser man  
He rose the morrow morn.

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

### *Kubla Khan*

*In the summer of the year 1797, Coleridge, then in ill health, relates that he had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's "Pilgrimage": "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." Coleridge goes on to say that he continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away, like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas without the after restoration of the latter.*

*"Then all the charm*

*Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair  
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,  
And each mis-shapes the other. Stay awhile,*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—  
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon  
The visions will return! And lo, he stays  
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms  
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more  
The pool becomes a mirror."*

**I**N Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place, as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain momently was forced;  
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst  
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;  
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.  
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid,  
And on her dulcimer she played,  
Singing of Mount Abora.  
Could I revive within me,  
Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
That with music loud and long,  
I would build that dome in air,  
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

*Genevieve*

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
All are but ministers of Love,  
And feed his sacred flame.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Oft in my waking dreams do I  
Live o'er again that happy hour,  
When midway on the mount I lay,  
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,  
Had blended with the lights of eve;  
And she was there, my hope, my joy,  
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armèd man,  
The statue of the armèd Knight;  
She stood and listened to my lay,  
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,  
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!  
She loves me best whene'er I sing  
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air;  
I sang an old and moving story—  
An old rude song, that suited well  
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,  
With downcast eyes and modest grace;  
For well she knew I could not choose  
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore  
Upon his shield a burning brand;  
And that for ten long years he wooed  
The Lady of the Land.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

I told her how he pined: and ah!  
The deep, the low, the pleading tone  
With which I sang another's love,  
    Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,  
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;  
And she forgave me, that I gazed  
    Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn  
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,  
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,  
    Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,  
And sometimes from the darksome shade,  
And sometimes starting up at once  
    In green and sunny glade—

There came and looked him in the face  
An angel beautiful and bright;  
And that he knew it was a Fiend,  
    This miserable Knight!

And that, unknowing what he did,  
He leaped amid a murderous band,  
And saved from outrage worse than death  
    The Lady of the Land;

And how she wept and clasped his knees;  
And how she tended him in vain—  
And ever strove to expiate  
    The scorn that crazed his brain;

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And that she nursed him in a cave;  
And how his madness went away,  
When on the yellow forest leaves  
A dying man he lay;

His dying words—but when I reached  
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,  
My faltering voice and pausing harp  
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense  
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;  
The music and the doleful tale,  
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,  
An undistinguishable throng,  
And gentle wishes long subdued,  
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,  
She blushed with love and virgin shame;  
And like the murmur of a dream,  
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,  
As conscious of my look she stept—  
Then suddenly, with timorous eye  
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,  
She pressed me with a meek embrace;  
And bending back her head, looked up,  
And gazed upon my face.



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,  
And partly 'twas a bashful art,  
That I might rather feel, than see,  
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,  
And told her love with virgin pride;  
And so I won my Genevieve,  
My bright and beauteous Bride.

*Hymn Before Sunrise, in the Vale of  
Chamouni*

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-star  
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause  
On thy bald, awful head, O sovereign Blanc!  
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base  
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form,  
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines  
How silently! Around thee and above,  
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black—  
An ebon mass. Methinks thou piercest it,  
As with a wedge! But when I look again,  
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,  
Thy habitation from eternity!  
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,  
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,  
Didst vanish from my thought. Entranced in prayer  
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,  
So sweet we know not we are listening to it,  
Thou, the mean while, wast blending with my thought—

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy—  
Till the dilating soul, enrapt, transfused,  
Into the mighty vision passing, there,  
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise  
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,  
Mute thanks, and secret ecstasy! Awake,  
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!  
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the vale!  
O, struggling with the darkness all the night,  
And visited all night by troops of stars,  
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink,  
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,  
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn  
Co-herald—wake, O, wake, and utter praise!  
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth?  
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?  
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!  
Who called you forth from night and utter death  
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,  
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,  
Forever shattered and the same forever?  
Who gave you your invulnerable life,  
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy  
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?  
And who commanded (and the silence came)  
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow  
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—  
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,  
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge  
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!  
Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven  
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun  
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers  
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?  
God!—let the torrents, like a shout of nations,  
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!  
God! sing, ye meadow-streams, with gladsome voice!  
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!  
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,  
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!  
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!  
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain-storm!  
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!  
Ye signs and wonders of the elements!  
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou, too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,  
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,  
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,  
Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast;  
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou  
That, as I raise my head, awhile bowed low  
In adoration, upward from thy base  
Slow traveling with dim eyes suffused with tears,  
Solemnly seemest, like a vapory cloud,  
To rise before me—Rise, O, ever rise!  
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the Earth!  
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,  
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,  
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,  
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

### *Christabel*

*In his preface to the first edition of "Christabel," Coleridge says: "The first part of the following poem was written in 1797, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in 1800, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness no less than with the liveliness of a vision; I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year. . . ."*

*"I have only to add, that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion."*

### PART I

'TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,  
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock:  
Tu-whit!—Tu-whoo!  
And hark, again! the crowing cock,  
How drowsily it crew!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Sir Leoline, the baron rich,  
Hath a toothless mastiff, which  
From her kennel beneath the rock  
Maketh answer to the clock,  
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;  
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,  
Sixteen short howls, not over-loud;  
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?  
The night is chilly, but not dark.  
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,  
It covers, but not hides the sky.  
The moon is behind, and at the full;  
And yet she looks both small and dull.  
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:  
'Tis a month before the month of May,  
And the spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,  
Whom her father loves so well,  
What makes her in the woods so late,  
A furlong from the castle gate?  
She had dreams all yesternight  
Of her own betrothèd knight;  
And she in the midnight wood will pray  
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,  
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,  
And naught was green upon the oak,  
But moss and rarest mistletoe:  
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,  
And in silence prayeth she.  
The lady sprang up suddenly,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The lovely lady, Christabel!  
It moaned as near as near could be,  
But what it is she cannot tell.  
On the other side, it seems to be,  
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?  
There is not wind enough in the air  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek—  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can,  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!  
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!  
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,  
And stole to the other side of the oak.  
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,  
Dressed in a silken robe of white,  
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:  
The neck that made that white robe wan,  
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;  
Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,  
And wildly glittered here and there  
The gems entangled in her hair.  
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see  
A lady so richly clad as she—  
Beautiful exceedingly!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"Mary mother, save me now!"  
(Said Christabel) "And who art thou?"  
The lady strange made answer meet,  
And her voice was faint and sweet—  
"Have pity on my sore distress,  
I scarce can speak for weariness:  
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!"  
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"  
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,  
Did thus pursue her answer meet:

"My sire is of a noble line,  
And my name is Geraldine;  
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,  
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:  
They choked my cries with force and fright,  
And tied me on a palfrey white.  
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,  
And they rode furiously behind.  
They spurred amain, their steeds were white;  
And once we crossed the shade of night.

As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,  
I have no thought what men they be;  
Nor do I know how long it is  
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)  
Since one, the tallest of the five,  
Took me from the palfrey's back,  
A weary woman, scarce alive.  
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:  
He placed me underneath this oak,  
He swore they would return with haste:  
Whither they went I cannot tell—  
I thought I heard, some minutes past,  
Sounds as of a castle-bell.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),  
And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,  
And comforted fair Geraldine:  
"O well, bright dame! may you command  
The service of Sir Leoline;  
And gladly our stout chivalry  
Will he send forth, and friends withal,  
To guide and guard you safe and free  
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose; and forth with steps they passed  
That strove to be, and were not, fast.  
Her gracious *stars* the lady blessed,  
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:  
"All our household are at rest,  
The hall as silent as the cell;  
Sir Leoline is weak in health,  
And may not well awakened be,  
But we will move as if in stealth;  
And I beseech your courtesy,  
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel  
Took the key that fitted well;  
A little door she opened straight,  
All in the middle of the gate;  
The gate that was ironed within and without,  
Where an army in battle array had marched out.  
The lady sank, belike through pain,  
And Christabel with might and main  
Lifted her up, a weary weight,  
Over the threshold of the gate;



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Then the lady rose again,  
And moved as she were not in pain.

So, free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court: right glad they were  
And Christabel devoutly cried  
To the lady by her side,  
"Praise we the Virgin all divine  
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"  
"Alas! alas!" said Geraldine,  
"I cannot speak for weariness."  
So, free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old  
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.  
The mastiff old did not awake,  
Yet she an angry moan did make!  
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?  
Never till now she uttered yell  
Beneath the eye of Christabel.  
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch;  
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,  
Pass as lightly as you will!  
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,  
Amid their own white ashes lying:  
But when the lady passed, there came  
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;  
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,  
And nothing else saw she thereby,  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"O softly tread!" said Christabel,  
"My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare;  
And, jealous of the listening air,  
They steal their way from stair to stair:  
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom—  
And now they pass the baron's room,  
As still as death, with stifled breath!  
And now have reached her chamber door;  
And now doth Geraldine press down  
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air  
And not a moonbeam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,  
Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
All made out of the carver's brain,  
For a lady's chamber meet:  
The lamp with twofold silver chain  
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim:  
But Christabel the lamp will trim.  
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,  
And left it swinging to and fro,  
While Geraldine, in wretched plight  
Sank down upon the floor below.  
"O weary lady, Geraldine,  
I pray you, drink this cordial wine;  
It is a wine of virtuous powers;  
My mother made it of wild flowers."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"And will your mother pity me,  
Who am a maiden most forlorn?"  
Christabel answered—"Wo is me,  
She died the hour that I was born.  
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,  
How on her death-bed she did say,  
That she should hear the castle-bell  
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.  
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"  
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon, with altered voice said she—  
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!  
I have power to bid thee flee."  
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?  
Why stares she with unsettled eye?  
Can she the bodiless dead espy?  
And why with hollow voice cries she,  
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—  
Though thou her guardian spirit be,  
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,  
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—  
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—  
Dear lady; it hath wildered you!  
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,  
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank;  
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,  
And from the floor whereon she sank,  
The lofty lady stood upright;  
She was most beautiful to see,  
Like a lady of a far countree.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And thus the lofty lady spake—  
"All they, who live in the upper sky,  
Do love you, holy Christabel!  
And you love them, and for their sake  
And for the good which me befell,  
Even I in my degrees will try,  
Fair maiden! to requite you well.  
But now unrobe yourself; for I  
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"  
And as the lady bade, did she;  
Her gentle limbs did she undress,  
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and wo  
So many thoughts moved to and fro,  
That vain it were her lids to close;  
So halfway from the bed she rose,  
And on her elbow did recline  
To look at the Lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,  
And slowly rolled her eyes around;  
Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
The cincture from beneath her breast.  
Her silken robe, and inner vest,  
Dropped to her feet, and full in view,  
Behold! her bosom and half her side—  
A sight to dream of, not to tell!  
O shield her; shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;  
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Deep from within she seems halfway  
To lift some weight with sick assay,  
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;  
Then suddenly, as one defied,  
Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
And lay down by the maiden's side!  
And in her arms the maid she took,  
                    Ah well-a-day!  
And with low voice and doleful look  
                    These words did say:  
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell  
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!  
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow  
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;  
                    But vainly thou warrest,  
                    For this is alone in  
                    Thy power to declare,  
                    That in the dim forest  
                    Thou heard'st a low moaning,  
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:  
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in  
                    charity,  
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I.

It was a lovely sight to see  
The lady Christabel, when she  
Was praying at the old oak tree.  
                    Amid the jagged shadows  
                    Of mossy leafless boughs,  
                    Kneeling in the moonlight,  
                    To make her gentle vows;  
Her slender palms together pressed,  
Heaving sometimes on her breast;

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Her face resigned to bliss or bale—  
Her face—O call it fair, not pale!  
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,  
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah, wo is me!)  
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,  
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,  
Dreaming that alone, which is—  
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,  
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?  
And lo! the worker of these harms,  
That holds the maiden in her arms,  
Seems to slumber still and mild,  
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—  
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,  
The night-birds all that hour were still.  
But now they are jubilant anew  
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!  
To-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell!

And see, the Lady Christabel  
Gathers herself from out her trance;  
Her limbs relax, her countenance  
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids  
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—  
Large tears that leave the lashes bright  
And oft the while she seems to smile  
As infants at a sudden light!

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
Like a youthful hermitess  
Beauteous in a wilderness,  
Who, praying always, prays in sleep,  
And, if she move unquietly,  
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,  
Comes back and tingles in her feet.  
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet:  
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?  
What if she knew her mother near?  
But this she knows, in joys and woes  
That saints will aid if men will call:  
For the blue sky bends over all!

### PART II

"Each matin-bell," the baron saith,  
"Knells us back to a world of death."  
These words Sir Leoline first said,  
When he rose and found his lady dead,  
These words Sir Leoline will say,  
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,  
That still at dawn the sacristan,  
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,  
Five-and-forty beads must tell  
Between each stroke—a warning knell,  
Which not a soul can choose but hear  
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell!  
And let the drowsy sacristan  
Still count as slowly as he can!"  
There is no lack of such, I ween,

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

As well fill up the space between.  
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair  
And dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,  
With ropes of rock and bells of air  
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,  
Who all give back, one after t'other,  
The death-note to their living brother;  
And oft, too, by the knell offended,  
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,  
The devil mocks the doleful tale  
With a merry peal from Borodale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud  
That merry peal comes ringing loud;  
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,  
And rises lightly from the bed;  
Puts on her silken vestments white,  
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,  
And, nothing doubting of her spell,  
Awakens the lady Christabel,  
"Sleep you, sweet Lady Christabel?  
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke, and spied  
The same who lay down by her side—  
O rather say, the same whom she  
Raised up beneath the old oak-tree!  
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!  
For she belike hath drunken deep  
Of all the blessedness of sleep!  
And while she spake, her looks, her air  
Such gentle thankfulness declare,  
That (so it seemed) her girded vests  
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.  
"Sure I have sinned," said Christabel,



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"Now Heaven be praised, if all be well";  
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,  
Did she the lofty lady greet,  
With such perplexity of mind  
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed  
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed  
That He, who on the cross did groan,  
Might wash away her sins unknown,  
She forthwith led fair Geraldine  
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall  
Are pacing both into the hall,  
And, pacing on through page and groom,  
Enter the Baron's presence-room.  
The Baron rose, and while he pressed  
His gentle daughter to his breast,  
With cheerful wonder in his eyes  
The Lady Geraldine espies,  
And gave such welcome to the same,  
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,  
And when she told her father's name,  
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,  
Murmuring o'er the name again,  
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;  
But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
And constancy lives in realms above,  
And life is thorny, and youth is vain;  
And to be wroth with one we love,

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Doth work like madness in the brain.  
And thus it chanced, as I divine,  
With Roland and Sir Leoline.  
Each spake words of high disdain  
And insult to his heart's best brother:  
They parted—ne'er to meet again!  
But never either found another  
To free the hollow heart from paining—  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
A dreary sea now flows between:  
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been.  
Sir Leoline, a moment's space,  
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:  
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine  
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age!  
His noble heart swelled high with rage;  
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,  
He would proclaim it far and wide  
With trump and solemn heraldry,  
That they, who thus had wronged the dame,  
Were base as spotted infamy!  
"And if they dare deny the same,  
My herald shall appoint a week,  
And let the recreant traitors seek  
My tourney court—that there and then  
I may dislodge their reptile souls  
From the bodies and forms of men!"  
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!  
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kened  
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And now the tears were on his face,  
And fondly in his arms he took  
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,  
Prolonging it with joyous look,  
Which when she viewed, a vision fell  
Upon the soul of Christabel,  
The vision of fear, the touch and pain  
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—  
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,  
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see!)

Again she saw that bosom old,  
Again she felt that bosom cold  
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound;  
Whereat the knight turned wildly round,  
And nothing saw but his own sweet maid  
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,  
And in its stead that vision blest,  
Which comforted her after-rest,  
While in the lady's arms she lay.  
Had put a rapture in her breast,  
And on her lips and o'er her eyes  
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,  
"What ails then my beloved child?"  
The Baron said.—His daughter mild  
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"  
I ween, she had no power to tell  
Aught else; so mighty was the spell.

Yet he who saw this Geraldine  
Had deemed her sure a thing divine,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Such sorrow with such grace she blended,  
As if she feared she had offended  
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!  
And with such lowly tones she prayed,  
She might be sent without delay  
Home to her father's mansion.

“Nay!

Nay, by my soul!” said Leoline.  
“Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!  
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,  
And take two steeds with trappings proud,  
And take the youth whom thou lovest best  
To bear thy harp and learn thy song,  
And clothe you both in solemn vest,  
And over the mountains haste along,  
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,  
Detain you on the valley road.  
And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,  
My merry bard he hastes, he hastes  
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth wood,  
And reaches soon that castle good  
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

“Bard Bracy, bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,  
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,  
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!  
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,  
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!  
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—  
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.  
He bids thee come without delay  
With all thy numerous array;  
And take thy lovely daughter home:

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And he will meet thee on the way  
With all his numerous array,  
White with their panting palfreys' foam:  
And by mine honor! I will say  
That I repent me of the day  
When I spake words of high disdain  
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!  
For since that evil hour hath flown,  
Many a summer's sun hath shone;  
Yet ne'er found I a friend again  
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell and clasped his knees,  
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;  
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,  
His gracious hail on all bestowing:  
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,  
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;  
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,  
This day my journey should not be,  
So strange a dream hath come to me,  
That I had vowed with music loud  
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,  
Warned by a vision in my rest!  
For in my sleep I saw that dove,  
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,  
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—  
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,  
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,  
Among the green herbs in the forest alone,  
Which when I saw and when I heard,  
I wondered what might ail the bird  
For nothing near it could I see,  
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"And in my dreams methought I went  
To search out what might there be found;  
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,  
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.  
I went and peered, and could descry  
No cause for her distressful cry;  
But yet, for her dear lady's sake,  
I stooped, methought, the dove to take.  
When lo! I saw a bright green snake  
Coiled around its wings and neck.  
Green as the herbs on which it couched,  
Close by the dove's its head it crouched!  
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!  
I woke; it was the midnight hour,  
The clock was echoing in the tower;  
But though my slumber was gone by,  
This dream it would not pass away—  
It seems to live upon my eye  
And thence I vowed this selfsame day,  
With music strong and saintly song,  
To wander through the forest bare,  
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,  
Half-listening, heard him with a smile;  
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,  
His eyes made up of wonder and love;  
And said, in courtly accents fine,  
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,  
With arms more strong than harp or song,  
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"  
He kissed her forehead as he spake,  
And Geraldine, in maiden wise,  
Casting down her large bright eyes,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

With blushing cheek and courtesy fine  
She turned her from Sir Leoline;  
Softly gathering up her train,  
That o'er her right arm fell again,  
And folded her arms across her chest,  
And couched her head upon her breast,  
And looked askance at Christabel—  
Jesu Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,  
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head;  
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,  
And with somewhat of malice and more of dread  
At Christabel she looked askance:  
One moment and the sight was fled!  
But Christabel, in dizzy trance  
Stumbling on the unsteady ground,  
Shuddered aloud with a hissing sound;  
And Geraldine again turned round,  
And like a thing that sought relief,  
Full of wonder and full of grief,  
She rolled her large bright eyes divine  
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,  
She nothing sees—no sight but one!  
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,  
I know not how, in fearful wise  
So deeply had she drunken in  
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
That all her features were resigned  
To this sole image in her mind:  
And passively did imitate  
That look of dull and treacherous hate!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,  
Still picturing that look askance,  
With forced, unconscious sympathy,  
Full before her father's view—  
As far as such a look could be  
In eyes so innocent and blue—  
And when the trance was o'er, the maid  
Paused a while, and inly prayed:  
Then, falling at the Baron's feet,  
"By my mother's soul do I entreat  
That thou this woman send away!"  
She said: and more she could not say;  
For what she knew she could not tell,  
O'ermastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,  
Sir Leoline? Thy only child  
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,  
So fair, so innocent, so mild;  
The same, for whom thy lady died.  
O by the pangs of her dear mother,  
Think thou no evil of thy child!  
For her, and thee, and for no other,  
She prayed the moment ere she died;  
Prayed that the babe for whom she died  
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!  
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,  
Sir Leoline!  
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child  
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain  
If thoughts like these had any share,  
They only swelled his rage and pain,  
And did but work confusion there.



## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

His heart was cleft with pain and rage,  
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild—  
Dishonored thus in his old age;  
Dishonored by his only child,  
And all his hospitality  
To the insulted daughter of his friend  
By more than woman's jealousy  
Brought thus to a disgraceful end!  
He rolled his eye with stern regard  
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,  
And said in tones abrupt, austere,  
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?  
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;  
And, turning from his own sweet maid,  
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,  
Led forth the Lady Geraldine!

### THE CONCLUSION OF PART II

A little child, a limber elf,  
Singing, dancing to itself,  
A fairy thing with red round cheeks  
That always finds and never seeks,  
Makes such a vision to the sight  
As fills a father's eyes with light;  
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast  
Upon his heart that he at last  
Must needs express his love's excess  
With words of unmeant bitterness.  
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together  
Thoughts so all unlike each other;  
To mutter and mock a broken charm,  
To dally with wrong that does no harm.  
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty  
At each wild word to feel within

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A sweet recoil of love and pity.  
And what, if in a world of sin  
(O sorrow and shame should this be true)  
Such giddiness of heart and brain  
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,  
So talks as it's most used to do.

*The Knight's Tomb*

*Strangely enough we find here in the masterly Coleridge that old impertinent rhetorical fault, the mixed metaphor. In the third line below, it is hard to visualize a grave excavated upon a breast, even though it be "the breast of Helvellyn." I should have placed the grave on the slope of Helvellyn.*

WHERE is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?  
Where may the grave of that good man be?  
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,  
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!  
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,  
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,  
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,  
Is gone—and the birch in its stead is grown.  
The Knight's bones are dust,  
And his good sword rust—  
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*Epitaph on Himself*

STOP, Christian passerby! Stop, child of God!  
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod  
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he—  
Oh! lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.!  
That he, who many a year, with toil of breath,  
Found death in life, may here find life in death!  
Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame,  
He asked and hoped through Christ—do thou the same.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

ENGLAND, 1774-1843

IT is a curious fact that Southey is virtually unread today; yet in his lifetime he was held in even greater esteem than were his contemporaries, Coleridge and Wordsworth. It may be that his personality, rather than his poems, attracted the admiration of his fellows. His verse fills fourteen volumes, embracing subjects of almost every description. On his longer poems, *Thalaba* and *The Curse of Kehama*, he based his hopes of lasting fame, but they are now read least of all. The reason is mainly their length and their remoteness from living interests. Their splendid diction is frequently eloquence rather than true poetry. Some of his shorter poems, such as *The Battle of Blenheim*, still hold their place. Southey became Poet Laureate of England in 1813, and had a pension from the Government. He declined a baronetcy.

### *His Books*

MY days among the Dead are passed;  
Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
The mighty minds of old:  
My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal  
And seek relief in woe;  
And while I understand and feel

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

How much to them I owe,  
My cheeks have often been bedewed  
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them  
I live in long-past years,  
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
Partake their hopes and fears;  
And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon  
My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all Futurity;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.

### *The Battle of Blenheim*

IT was a summer evening,  
Old Kaspar's work was done,  
And he before his cottage door  
Was sitting in the sun,  
And by him sported on the green  
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin  
Roll something large and round,  
Which he beside the rivulet  
In playing there had found;  
He came to ask what he had found,  
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,  
Who stood expectant by;  
And then the old man shook his head,  
And with a natural sigh,  
' 'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,  
'Who fell in the great victory.

'I find them in the garden,  
For there's many here about;  
And often when I go to plough,  
The ploughshare turns them out!  
For many thousand men,' said he,  
'Were slain in that great victory.'

'Now tell us what 'twas all about,'  
Young Peterkin, he cries;  
And little Wilhelmine looks up  
With wonder-waiting eyes;  
'Now tell us all about the war,  
And what they fought each other for.'

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,  
'Who put the French to rout;  
But what they fought each other for  
I could not well make out;  
But everybody said,' quoth he,  
'That 'twas a famous victory.

'My father lived at Blenheim then,  
Yon little stream hard by;  
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,  
And he was forced to fly;  
So with his wife and child he fled,  
Nor had he where to rest his head.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

'With fire and sword the country round  
Was wasted far and wide,  
And many a childing mother then,  
And new-born baby died;  
But things like that, you know, must be  
At every famous victory.

'They say it was a shocking sight  
After the field was won;  
For many thousand bodies here  
Lay rotting in the sun;  
But things like that, you know, must be  
After a famous victory.

'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,  
And our good Prince Eugene.'  
'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!'  
Said little Wilhelmine.  
'Nay . . . nay . . . my little girl,' quoth he,  
'It was a famous victory.

'And everybody praised the Duke  
Who this great fight did win.'  
'But what good came of it at last?'  
Quoth little Peterkin.  
'Why, that I cannot tell,' said he,  
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

ROBERT SOUTHEY

*Malice*

FROM "THE CURSE OF KEHAMA"

I CHARM thy life  
From the weapons of strife,  
From stone and from wood,  
From fire and from flood,  
From the serpent's tooth,  
And the beasts of blood;  
From sickness I charm thee,  
And time shall not harm thee,  
But earth, which is mine,  
Its fruits shall deny thee;  
And water shall hear me,  
And know thee and fly thee;  
And the winds shall not touch thee  
When they pass by thee;  
And the dews shall not wet thee  
When they fall nigh thee:  
And thou shalt seek death  
To release thee in vain;  
Thou shalt live in thy pain,  
While Kehama shall reign  
With a fire in thy heart,  
And a fire in thy brain;  
And sleep shall obey me,  
And visit thee never,  
And the curse shall be on thee,  
For ever and ever.



ROBERT SOUTHEY

*Wat Tyler*

*The refrain of this song was the motto of Wat Tyler's rebels, who marched upon London in 1381.*

WHEN Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?"

Wretched is the infant's lot,  
Born within the straw-roofed cot;  
Be he generous, wise or brave,  
He must only be a slave.  
Long, long labor, little rest,  
Still to toil, to be oppressed;  
Drained by taxes of his store,  
Punished next for being poor:  
This is the poor wretch's lot,  
Born within the straw-roofed cot.

While the peasant works—to sleep,  
What the peasant sows—to reap,  
On the couch of ease to lie,  
Rioting in revelry;  
Be he villain, be he fool,  
Still to hold despotic rule,  
Trampling on his slaves with scorn!  
This is to be nobly born.

"When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?"

## CHARLES LAMB

ENGLAND, 1775-1834

LAMB produced no poems equal to his immortal prose writings, but I cannot refrain from including in this collection his *Old Familiar Faces*. He was a wayward and eccentric humorist—mingling the sweetness of the child with the knowledge of the scholar. The name *Elia* under which his essays were written was that of a fellow-clerk in the India House, where Lamb was employed from 1792 to 1825.

### *The Old Familiar Faces*

*Although the fame of Lamb as a poet rests mainly upon these lines, "The Old Familiar Faces" is scarcely a poem at all. The metre halts, stumbles, and there is little or no magic in it. But, as Arthur Symonds observes, "it is speech, naked human speech, such as rarely gets through the lovely disguise of verse. It has the raw humanity of Walt Whitman, and almost hurts us by a kind of dumb helplessness in it." There are few such poems in literature, and no other in the work of Lamb.*

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,  
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,  
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

CHARLES LAMB

I loved a Love once, fairest among women:  
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man:  
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;  
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,  
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,  
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,  
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?  
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,  
And some are taken from me; all are departed—  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

*On an Infant Dying as Soon as Born*

I SAW where in the shroud did lurk  
A curious frame of Nature's work;  
A floweret crushèd in the bud,  
A nameless piece of Babyhood,  
Was in her cradle-coffin lying;  
Extinct, with scarce the sense of dying:  
So soon to exchange the imprisoning womb  
For darker closets of the tomb!  
She did but ope an eye, and put  
A clear beam forth, then straight up shut

CHARLES LAMB

For the long dark; ne'er more to see  
Through glasses of mortality.

Riddle of destiny, who can show  
What thy short visit meant, or know  
What thy errand here below?  
Shall we say that Nature blind  
Checked her hand, and changed her mind,  
Just when she had exactly wrought  
A finished pattern without fault?  
Could she flag, or could she tire,  
Or lacked she the Promethean fire  
(With her nine moons' long workings sickened)  
That should thy little limbs have quickened?  
Limbs so firm, they seemed to assure  
Life of health, and days mature:  
Woman's self in miniature!  
Limbs so fair, they might supply  
(Themselves now but cold imagery)  
The sculptor to make Beauty by.  
Or did the stern-eyed Fate descry  
That babe or mother, one must die;  
So in mercy left the stock  
And cut the branch; to save the shock  
Of young years widowed, and the pain  
When single state comes back again  
To the lone man who, reft of wife,  
Thenceforward drags a maimèd life?  
The economy of Heaven is dark,  
And wisest clerks have missed the mark,  
Why human buds, like this, should fall,  
More brief than fly ephemeral  
That has his day; while shrivelled crones  
Stiffen with age to stocks and stones;

CHARLES LAMB

And crabbèd use the conscience sears  
In sinners of an hundred years.

Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,  
Baby fond, thou ne'er wilt miss:  
Rites, which custom does impose,  
Silver bells, and baby clothes;  
Coral redder than those lips  
Which pale death did late eclipse;  
Music framed for infants' glee,  
Whistle never tuned for thee;  
Though thou want'st not, thou shalt have them,  
Loving hearts were they which gave them.  
Let not one be missing; nurse,  
See them laid upon the hearse  
Of infant slain by doom perverse.  
Why should kings and nobles have  
Pictured trophies to their grave,  
And we, churls, to thee deny  
Thy pretty toys with thee to lie—  
A more harmless vanity?

BLANCO WHITE

ENGLAND, 1775-1841

*Night*

**M**YSTERIOUS Night! when our first parent knew  
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,  
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,  
This glorious canopy of light and blue?  
Yet, 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,  
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,  
And lo! creation widened in man's view.

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed  
Within thy beams, O Sun? or who could find  
Whilst fruit, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,  
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?  
Why do we, then, shun *death*, with anxious strife?  
If Light conceals so much—wherefore not Life?

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

ENGLAND, 1775-1864

**L**ANDOR is the great solitary of English literature. Few men have ever impressed their peers so profoundly, or the general public so slightly. Of all celebrated authors, he has been one of the least popular. He was a master of prose, who occasionally wrote poetry. Two of his poems, *Rose Aylmer* and the quatrain beginning "I strove with none," merit immortality. One of his great distinctions is to have inspired Swinburne to write the noble poem he inscribed to Landor.

### *Rose Aylmer*

**A**H, what avails the sceptred race!  
Ah, what the form divine!  
What every virtue, every grace!  
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes  
May weep, but never see,  
A night of memories and sighs  
I consecrate to thee.

### *Around the Child*

**A**ROUND the child bend all the three  
Sweet Graces—Faith, Hope, Charity.  
Around the man bend other faces—  
Pride, Envy, Malice, are his Graces.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

*Verse*

PAST ruined Ilion Helen lives,  
Alcestis rises from the shades;  
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives  
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil  
Hide all the peopled hills you see,  
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail  
These many summers you and me.

*Plays*

ALAS how soon the hours are over  
Counted us out to play the lover!  
And how much narrower is the stage  
Allotted us to play the sage!

But when we play the fool, how wide  
The theater expands! Beside  
How long the audience sits before us!  
How many prompters, what a chorus!

*Well I Remember How You Smiled*

WELL I remember how you smiled  
To see me write your name upon  
The soft sea-sand—*Oh! what a child!*  
*You think you're writing upon stone!*



WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I have since written what no tide  
Shall ever wash away, what men  
Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide  
And find Ianthe's name again.

*Dirce*

STAND close around, ye Stygian set,  
With Dirce in one boat conveyed!  
Or Charon, seeing, may forget  
That he is old and she a shade.

*To Robert Browning*

THERE is delight in singing, though none hear  
Beside the singer; and there is delight  
In praising, though the praiser sit alone  
And see the praised far off him, far above.  
Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,  
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,  
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,  
No man hath walked along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze  
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

*Finis*

I STROVE with none, for none was worth my strife.  
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art;  
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

*Lament*

MILD is the parting year, and sweet  
The odor of the falling spray;  
Life passes on more rudely fleet,  
And balmless is its closing day.

I wait its close, I court its gloom,  
But mourn that never must there fall  
Or on my breast or on my tomb  
The tear that would have soothed it all.

*On Lucretia Borgia's Hair*

BORGIA, thou once wert almost too august  
And high for adoration; now thou'rt dust;  
All that remains of thee these plaits unfold,  
Calm hair meandering in pellucid gold.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

*A Lyric*

YOU smiled, you spoke, and I believed,  
By every word and smile deceived.  
Another man would hope no more;  
Nor hope I what I hoped before:  
But let not this last wish be vain;  
Deceive, deceive me once again!

*The Shells*

*These lines from "Gebir" have a stately quality that harks back to the majesty of Milton. Arthur Symonds calls attention to Landor's marching lines in Gebir: he calls them "cold, sensitive, splendid, precise, restrained."*

BUT I have sinuous shells of pearly hue  
Within, and they that luster have imbibed  
In the sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked  
His chariot wheel stands midway in the wave:  
Shake one and it awakens, then apply  
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,  
And it remembers its august abodes,  
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

*Æschylos and Sophocles*

SOPHOCLES. Thou goest then, and leavest none  
behind  
Worthy to rival thee!  
Æschylos. Nay, say not so.  
Whose is the hand that now is pressing mine?

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

A hand I may not ever press again!  
What glorious forms hath it brought boldly forth  
From Pluto's realm! The blind old CEdipos  
Was led on one side by Antigone,  
Sophocles propped the other.

*Sophocles.*

Sophocles

Soothed not Prometheus chained upon his rock,  
Keeping the vultures and the Gods away;  
Sophocles is not greater than the chief  
Who conquered Ilion, nor could he revenge  
His murder, or stamp everlasting brand  
Upon the brow of that adulterous wife.

*Æschylos.* Live, and do more. Thine is the Lemnian  
isle,

And thou has placed the arrows in the hand  
Of Philoctetes, hast assuaged his wounds  
And given his aid without which Greece had failed.

*Sophocles.* I did indeed drive off the pest of flies;

We also have our pest of them which buzz  
About our honey, darken it, and sting;  
We laugh at them, for under hands like ours,  
Without the wing that Philoctetes shook,  
One single feather crushes the whole swarm.  
I must be grave. Hath Sicily such charms  
Above our Athens? Many charms hath she,  
But she hath kings. Accursed be the race!

*Æschylos.* But where kings honor better men than  
they

Let kings be honored too. The laurel crown  
Surmounts the golden; wear it; and farewell.

## THOMAS CAMPBELL

SCOTLAND, 1777-1844

CAMPBELL gained fame by producing, at twoney-one, his principal poem, *The Pleasures of Hope*. Despite its didacticism and marks of juvenility, the vigor of thought and description, and power of versification displayed in the poem, made it a marvellous performance for so young a man. His other larger poems are *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809) and *Theodric* (1824). It is not his longer poems, however, that give Thomas Campbell a secure place in English literature, but his patriotic and war lyrics, notably *Ye Mariners of England* and *Hohenlinden*.

### *Ye Mariners of England*

YE Mariners of England  
That guard our native seas!  
Whose flag has braved a thousand years  
The battle and the breeze!  
Your glorious standard launch again  
To match another foe;  
And sweep through the deep,  
While the stormy winds do blow!  
While the battle rages loud and long  
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers  
Shall start from every wave—  
For the deck it was their field of fame,  
And Ocean was their grave:

THOMAS CAMPBELL

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell  
Your manly hearts shall glow,  
As ye sweep through the deep,  
While the stormy winds do blow!  
While the battle rages loud and long  
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,  
No towers along the steep;  
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,  
Her home is on the deep.  
With thunders from her native oak  
She quells the floods below,  
As they roar on the shore,  
When the stormy winds do blow!  
When the battle rages loud and long,  
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England  
Shall yet terrific burn;  
Till danger's troubled night depart  
And the star of peace return.  
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!  
Our song and feast shall flow  
To the fame of your name,  
When the storm has ceased to blow!  
When the fiery fight is heard no more,  
And the storm has ceased to blow.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

*Taste*

FROM "VALEDICTORY STANZA TO KEMBLE"

TASTE, like the silent dial's power,  
That, when supernal light is given,  
Can measure inspiration's hour,  
And tell its height in heaven.

*Hohenlinden*

ON Linden, when the sun was low,  
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow;  
And dark as winter was the flow  
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,  
When the drum beat, at dead of night,  
Commanding fires of death to light  
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed  
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,  
And furious every charger neighed  
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,  
Then rushed the steed to battle driven,  
And louder than the bolts of Heaven,  
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow  
On Linden's hills of stained snow;  
And bloodier yet the torrent flow  
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun  
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,  
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun,  
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave  
Who rush to glory or the grave!  
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,  
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part, where many meet!  
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,  
And every turf beneath their feet  
Shall be a soldier's sepulcher.

*Lord Ullin's Daughter*

A CHIEFTAIN to the Highlands bound  
Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry!  
And I'll give thee a silver pound  
To row us o'er the ferry!"

"Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle,  
This dark and stormy water?"  
"Oh, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,  
And this, Lord Ullin's daughter.

"And fast before her father's men  
Three days we've fled together,  
For should he find us in the glen,  
My blood would stain the heather.



## THOMAS CAMPBELL

"His horsemen hard behind us ride;  
Should they our steps discover,  
Then who will cheer my bonny bride  
When they have slain her lover?"

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,  
"I'll go, my chief, I'm ready:  
It is not for your silver bright,  
But for your winsome lady:

"And by my word! the bonny bird  
In danger shall not tarry;  
So though the waves are raging white,  
I'll row you o'er the ferry."

By this the storm grew loud apace,  
The water-wraith was shrieking;  
And in the scowl of heaven each face  
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,  
And as the night grew drearer  
Adown the glen rode armed men,  
Their trampling sounded nearer.

"O haste thee, haste!" the lady cries,  
"Though tempest round us gather;  
I'll meet the raging of the skies,  
But not an angry father!"

The boat has left a stormy land,  
A stormy sea before her,  
When, oh, too strong for human hand!  
The tempest gathered o'er her.

## THOMAS CAMPBELL

And still they rowed amidst the roar  
Of waters fast prevailing:  
Lord Ullin reached that fatal shore—  
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For, sore dismayed, through storm and shade  
His child he did discover:—  
One lovely hand she stretched for aid,  
And one was round her lover.

“Come back! come back!” he cried in grief,  
“Across this stormy water,  
And I’ll forgive your Highland chief:  
My daughter!—O my daughter!”

’Twas vain: the loud waves lashed the shore,  
Return or aid preventing:  
The waters wild went o’er his child,  
And he was left lamenting.

## JAMES MONTGOMERY

SCOTLAND, 1776–1854

### *The Common Lot*

ONCE, in the flight of ages past,  
There lived a Man;—and WHO WAS HE?  
Mortal; howe’er thy lot be cast,  
That Man resembled thee.

## JAMES MONTGOMERY

Unknown the region of his birth,  
The land in which he died unknown:  
His name has perished from the earth,  
This truth survives alone—

That joy and grief, and hope and fear,  
Alternate triumphed in his breast:  
His bliss and woe—a smile, a tear!  
Oblivion hides the rest.

The bounding pulse, the languid limb,  
The changing spirit's rise and fall—  
We know that these were felt by him,  
For these are felt by all.

He suffered—but his pangs are o'er;  
Enjoyed—but his delights are fled;  
Had friends—his friends are now no more;  
And foes—his foes are dead.

He loved—but whom he loved, the grave  
Hath lost in its unconscious womb:  
Oh, she was fair—but naught could save  
Her beauty from the tomb.

He saw whatever thou hast seen,  
Encountered all that troubles thee;  
He was—whatever thou hast been:  
He is—what thou shalt be.

The rolling seasons, day and night,  
Sun, moon and stars, the earth and main,  
Erewhile his portion, life and light,  
To him exist in vain.

## JAMES MONTGOMERY

The clouds and sunbeams, o'er his eye  
That once their shades and glory threw,  
Have left in yonder silent sky  
No vestige where they flew.

The annals of the human race,  
Their ruins, since the world began,  
Of *him* afford no other trace  
Than this—THERE LIVED A MAN.

### *The Stranger*

*Here is Montgomery's dramatic way of expressing the moral ideal that appeared later in a more elaborate form in the "Sir Launfal" of James Russell Lowell.*

A POOR wayfaring man of grief  
Hath often crossed me on my way,  
Who sued so humbly for relief  
That I could never answer "Nay."  
I had not power to ask his name,  
Whither he went, or whence he came;  
Yet there was something in his eye  
That won my love—I knew not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread,  
He entered. Not a word he spake.  
Just perishing for want of bread,  
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,  
And ate—but gave me part again.  
Mine was an angel's portion then;  
For while I fed with eager haste,  
That crust was manna to my taste.

## JAMES MONTGOMERY

I spied him where a fountain burst  
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;  
The heedless water mocked his thirst;  
He heard it, saw it hurrying on.  
I ran to raise the sufferer up:  
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,  
Dipped, and returned it running o'er:  
I drank and never thirsted more.

'Twas night; the floods were out—it blew  
A winter hurricane aloof;  
I heard his voice abroad, and flew  
To bid him welcome to my roof.  
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest—  
Laid him on my own couch to rest;  
Then made the earth my bed, and seemed  
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

Stripped, wounded, beaten nigh to death,  
I found him by the highway side:  
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,  
Revived his spirit, and supplied  
Wine, oil, refreshment; he was healed.  
I had, myself, a wound concealed—  
But from that hour forgot the smart,  
And peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw him next, condemned  
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;  
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,  
And honored him midst shame and scorn.  
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,  
He asked if I for him would die;  
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,  
But the free spirit cried, "I will."

JAMES MONTGOMERY

Then in a moment, to my view,  
The stranger darted from disguise:  
The tokens in his hands I knew—  
My Saviour stood before mine eyes.  
He spake; and my poor name he named—  
"Of Me thou hast not been ashamed;  
These deeds shall thy memorial be;  
Fear not! thou didst them unto me."

CAROLINE KEPPEL

ENGLAND, 1735-?

*Robin Adair*

*This song first became popular late in the 18th century when it was sung to an Irish air, Eileen Aroon. Of several versions written in English, this is the best. Burns made a Scotch version.*

WHAT'S this dull town to me?  
Robin's not near,  
He whom I wished to see,  
Wished for to hear;  
Where's all the joy and mirth  
Made life a heaven on earth,  
Oh, they're all fled with thee,  
Robin Adair!

What made the assembly shine?  
Robin Adair:  
What made the ball so fine?  
Robin was there:

CAROLINE KEPPEL

What, when the play was o'er,  
What made my heart so sore?  
Oh, it was parting with  
Robin Adair!

But now thou art far from me,  
Robin Adair;  
But now I never see  
Robin Adair;  
Yet him I loved so well  
Still in my heart shall dwell:  
Oh, I can ne'er forget  
Robin Adair!

Welcome on shore again,  
Robin Adair!  
Welcome once more again,  
Robin Adair!  
I feel thy trembling hand:  
Tears in thy eyelids stand,  
To greet thy native land,  
Robin Adair.

Long I ne'er saw thee, Love,  
Robin Adair;  
Still I prayed for thee, Love,  
Robin Adair:  
When thou wert far at sea,  
Many made love to me,  
But still I thought on thee,  
Robin Adair.

## CAROLINE KEPPEL

Come to my heart again,  
Robin Adair;  
Never to part again,  
Robin Adair;  
And if thou still art true,  
I will be constant too,  
And will wed none but you,  
Robin Adair!

## THOMAS MOORE

IRELAND, 1779-1852

**F**EW poets have ever enjoyed greater popularity during their lifetime than this Irish lyricist, whose Muse is forever on the wing, ever fluttering in the gale, ever flashing in the sun. There is flight and sparkle in his poetry.

Hazlitt points out, on the other hand, that "his facility in production lessens the effect of, and hangs as a dead weight upon, what he produces. His levity at last oppresses. The infinite delight he takes in an infinite number of things creates indifference in minds less susceptible of pleasure than his own." Edgar Allan Poe adds this comment in 1840: "A vivid fancy, an epigrammatic spirit, a fine taste and a musical ear have made Moore the most popular poet now living."

A lyricist, gay and nimble, witty and worldly, Moore in *Lalla Rookh*—like Drake in *The Culprit Fay*—is the poet of pure fancy: he never rises into the higher realm of the imagination, where we find a Shelley singing. He never sees anything deeply: he only skims the surface. Highly endowed with a musical swing, he yet lacks the high seriousness that causes poetry to become a stay and a support in our mortal struggle.



THOMAS MOORE

*The Flight of Fondest Hopes*

FROM "THE FIRE-WORSHIPERS"

MY dreams have boded all too right:  
We part—for ever part—to-night!—  
I knew, I knew it *could* not last—  
'Twas bright, 'twas heavenly, but 'tis past!  
Oh! ever thus, from childhood's hour,  
I've seen my fondest hopes decay:  
I never loved a tree or flower,  
But 'twas the first to fade away.  
I never nursed a dear gazelle,  
To glad me with its soft black eye,  
But when it came to know me well,  
And love me, it was sure to die!

*The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*

THE harp that once through Tara's halls  
The soul of music shed,  
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,  
As if that soul were fled.  
So sleeps the pride of former days,  
So glory's thrill is o'er,  
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,  
Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright  
The Harp of Tara swells;  
The chord alone, that breaks at night,  
Its tale of ruin tells.

THOMAS MOORE

Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,  
The only throb she gives,  
Is when some heart indignant breaks,  
To show that still she lives.

*Oft in the Stilly Night*

OFt in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Fond Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me:  
The smiles, the tears,  
Of boyhood's years,  
The words of love then spoken:  
The eyes that shone,  
Now dimmed and gone,  
The cheerful hearts now broken.  
Thus in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Sad Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.

When I remember all  
The friends so linked together  
I've seen around me fall,  
Like leaves in wintry weather,  
I feel like one  
Who treads alone  
Some banquet-hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled,  
Whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed.

THOMAS MOORE

Thus in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Sad Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.

*The Last Rose of Summer*

'TIS the last rose of summer  
Left blooming alone;  
All her lovely companions  
Are faded and gone,  
No flower of her kindred,  
No rose-bud is nigh,  
To reflect back her blushes,  
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one!  
To pine on the stem;  
Since the lovely are sleeping,  
Go, sleep thou with them.  
Thus kindly I scatter  
Thy leaves o'er the bed  
Where thy mates of the garden  
Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,  
When friendships decay,  
And from Love's shining circle  
The gems drop away.  
When true hearts lie withered,  
And fond ones are flown,  
Oh! who would inhabit  
This bleak world alone?

THOMAS MOORE

*As Down in the Sunless Retreats*

AS down in the sunless retreats of the ocean  
Sweet flowers are springing no mortal can see,  
So, deep in my soul, the still prayer of devotion  
Unheard by the world, rises silent to thee,  
My God, silent to thee—  
Pure, warm, silent to thee.

As still to the star of its worship, though clouded,  
The needle points faithfully o'er the dim sea;  
So dark when I roam, in this wintry world shrouded,  
The hope of my spirit turns trembling to thee,  
My God, trembling to thee—  
Pure, warm, trembling to thee.

*As a Beam o'er the Face of the Waters  
May Glow*

AS a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow  
While the tide runs in darkness and coldness  
below;  
So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,  
Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws  
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes,  
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,  
For which joy has no balm and affliction no sting—

Oh! this thought in the midst of enjoyment will stay,  
Like a dead leafless branch in the summer's bright ray:  
The beams of the warm sun play round it in vain,  
It may smile in his light, but it blooms not again.

THOMAS MOORE

*From "Farewell! but Whenever You  
Welcome the Hour"*

**F**AREWELL! but whenever you welcome the hour  
That awakens the night-song of mirth in your  
bower,

Then think of the friend who once welcomed it too,  
And forgot his own griefs to be happy with you.  
His griefs may return—not a hope may remain  
Of the few that have brightened his pathway of pain—  
But he ne'er will forget the short vision that threw  
Its enchantment around him while lingering with you!

Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,  
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy!  
Which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,  
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.  
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled!  
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;  
You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

*Believe Me, if All Those Endearing Young  
Charms*

**B**ELIEVE me, if all those endearing young charms,  
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,  
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,  
Like fairy-gifts fading away,  
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,  
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,  
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart  
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

## THOMAS MOORE

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,  
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,  
That the fervor and faith of a soul may be known,  
To which time will but make thee more dear!  
No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,  
But as truly loves on to the close,  
As the sunflower turns to her god when he sets  
The same look which she turned when he rose!

## EBENEZER ELLIOTT

ENGLAND, 1781-1849

ELLIOTT lived in or near Sheffield in those years when the earth was shaking with the tramp of the toiling millions and the air was vibrating with their cries for justice. Himself a toiler, an ironmonger, he voiced the cause in revolutionary verse.

Yet it was not the tyrannic bread-tax that first made him a poet, but rather the picture of a primrose. This sent him wandering into glens and woodlands. His nature poems are notable, but it was his labor poems that gave his name to all the winds of the world.

He never could forget the haggard faces and broken bodies of the poor. Writing of him in 1844, Dr. Rufus W. Griswold (famous as the literary executor and biographer of Edgar Poe) said: "Elliott has felt the heavy and unequal pressure of the laws, especially of those commercial restrictions by which fully twenty percent is added to the price of bread, turning the sweat of the poor into gold for the rich. . . . This poet of the poor has exercised a greater influence against the cruel and pernicious Corn Laws than any other person unconnected with the administration of public affairs. . . . Carlyle, Ruskin and other critics, seeing in him incontestable signs of genius, have at last handed him up to fame. . . . He ranks now among the first of the living poets of England."

## EBENEZER ELLIOTT

The Corn-Law Rhymer is chiefly remembered for his *Corn Law Rhymes*, impassioned poems that cowed oppressors and sent hope into the hearts of the stooped, silent toilers. He became the prophet voice of their indignation against the old injustice of their lot.

Edward Dowden says in a recent critique: "Elliott was a man of slender stature, with narrow forehead, bushy eyebrows under which gleamed the vivid fire of gray-blue eyes, sensitive nostrils, and mouth apt to express love as much as scorn. . . . His imagination was ambitious, and imperfectly trained: he accordingly dealt with large and passionate themes, entering into them with complete *abandon*; and he was hurried on to passages of genuine inspiration; real heights and depths were within his range; heavenly lights alternate with nether darkness."

And George Gilfillan, the famous Scotch critic of the Victorian age, paints a powerful picture of this friend of the struggling poor:

"We can never divest our minds as we read him of the image of a grim son of the furnace, black as Erebus, riving, tearing, and smiting at his reluctant words; storming now and then at the disobedient ends of sentences. Glancing æsthetically at the inspired ironmonger, you see at once that strength is his principal characteristic; nor do you care to settle the question whether it be strength of intellect, or passion, or imagination, or a triple twist of all three.

"Elliott's language reminds you of the blue and nervous veins of a strong hand, so surcharged are his words with the blood of thought and passion. And when it rises to the breath of his indignation, like some 'tumultuous moon-stirred Atlantic'—when he mounts on the full whirlwind of his soul—you are irresistibly reminded of that impetuous prophet who gazed on the 'terrible crystal', and stood below the shadow of the visionary wheels, and walked barefoot upon the stones of fire, and saw in the porch the 'dark idolatries of the alienated Judah', and plucked down forks of the lightning for words to express the fury of his ire,

## EBENEZER ELLIOTT

and heaved up from his breast burdens that 'made the pagan mountains shake and Zion's cedars bow.'"

As the spirit moves him at times, Elliott unquestionably has—if not all the inspiration, yet all the fury of the prophet—his forgetfulness of self, his heat of spirit, the contortions and spasms by which he is delivered of his message, as of a demon.

### *Song*

CHILD is thy father dead?  
Father is gone!  
Why did they tax his bread?  
God's will be done!  
Mother has sold her bed:  
Better to die than wed!  
Where shall she lay her head?  
Home we have none!

Father clammed<sup>1</sup> thrice a week—  
God's will be done!  
Long for work did he seek,  
Work he found none.  
Tears on his hollow cheek  
Told what no tongue could speak:  
Why did his master break?  
God's will be done!

<sup>1</sup> Fasted; was hungry.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

Doctor said air was best—  
Food we had none;  
Father, with panting breast,  
Groaned to be gone:  
Now he is with the blest—  
Mother says death is best!  
We have no place of rest—  
Yes, we have one!

*Battle Song*

*This is the famous battle-song, which, nearly a century ago, startled the easy-going overlords of England. It has in it something of the tramping thunder of Victor Hugo's "Chasseur."*

DAY like our souls is fiercely dark;  
What then? 'Tis day!  
We sleep no more; the cock crows—hark!  
To arms! away!  
They come! they come! the knell is rung  
Of us or them;  
Wide o'er their march the pomp is flung  
Of gold and gem.  
What collared hound of lawless sway,  
To famine dear—  
What pensioned slave of Attila,  
Leads in the rear?  
Come they from Scythian wilds afar,  
Our blood to spill?  
Wear they the livery of the Czar?  
They do his will.  
Nor tasselled silk, nor epaulette,  
Nor plume, nor torse—

## EBENEZER ELLIOTT

No splendor gilds, all sternly met,  
Our foot and horse.  
But, dark and still, we inly glow,  
Condensed in ire!  
Strike tawdy slaves, and ye shall know  
Our gloom is fire.  
In vain your pomp, ye evil powers,  
Insults the land;  
Wrongs, vengeance and *the cause* are ours,  
And God's right hand!  
Madmen! they trample into snakes  
The wormy clod!  
Like fire, beneath their feet awakes  
The sword of God!  
Behind, before, above, below,  
They rouse the brave;  
Where'er they go, they make a foe,  
Or find a grave.

### *A Poet's Epitaph*

STOP, Mortal! Here thy brother lies,  
The Poet of the Poor.  
His books were rivers, woods and skies,  
The meadow and the moor;  
His teachers were the torn hearts' wail,  
The tyrant and the slave,  
The street, the factory, the jail,  
The palace—and the grave!  
The meanest thing, earth's feeblest worm,  
He feared to scorn or hate;  
And honored in a peasant's form  
The equal of the great.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

But if he loved the rich who make  
The poor man's little more,  
Ill could he praise the rich who take  
From plundered labor's store.  
A hand to do, a head to plan,  
A heart to feel and dare—  
Tell man's worst foes, here lies the man  
Who drew them as they are.

*Corn-Law Hymn*

L ORD, call thy pallid angel,  
The tamer of the strong,  
And bid him whip with want and woe  
The champions of the wrong!  
Oh, say thou not to ruin's flood,  
"Up, sluggard, why so slow?"  
But alone let them groan,  
The lowest of the low;  
And basely beg the bread they curse  
Where millions curse them now!

*Marching Song*

O THERS march in freedom's van;  
Canst not thou what others can?  
Thou a Briton! thou a man!  
What are worms, if human thou?

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

Wilt thou, deaf to hiss and groan,  
Breed white slaves for every zone?  
Make yon robber feed his own,  
Then proclaim thyself a man.

Still shall paltry tyrants tell  
Freeman when to buy and sell?  
Spurn the coward thought to hell!  
Tell the miscreants what they are.

Dost thou cringe, that fiends may scowl?  
Wert thou born without a soul?  
Spaniels feed, are whipped, and howl;  
Spaniels! thou art starved and whipped:

Wilt thou still feed palaced knaves?  
Shall thy sons be traitors' slaves?  
Shall they sleep in workhouse-graves?  
Shall they toil for parish-pay?

Wherefore did'st thou woo and wed?  
Why a bride was Mary led?  
Shall she, dying, curse thy bed?  
Tyrants! tyrants! no, by Heaven!

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

*The People's Anthem*

WHEN wilt thou save the people?  
O God of mercy, when?  
Not kings and lords, but nations!  
Not thrones and crowns, but men!  
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they;  
Let them not pass, like weeds away—  
Their heritage a sunless day.  
God save the people!

Shall crime bring crime forever,  
Strength aiding still the strong?  
Is it thy will, O Father,  
That man shall toil for wrong?  
"No!" say thy mountains; "No!" thy skies;  
Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,  
And songs be heard instead of sighs.  
God save the people!

JANE TAYLOR  
ENGLAND, 1783-1824

*The Philosopher's Scales*

*Here are stanzas of serious fooling, all of them weighted  
with moral ideas.*

A MONK, when his rites sacerdotal were o'er,  
In the depth of his cell with its stone-covered  
floor,  
Resigning to thought his chimerical brain,  
Once formed the contrivance we now shall explain;  
But whether by magic's or alchemy's powers  
We know not; indeed, 'tis no business of ours.

Perhaps it was only by patience and care,  
At last, that he brought his invention to bear.  
In youth 'twas projected, but years stole away,  
And ere 'twas complete he was wrinkled and gray;  
But success is secure, unless energy fails;  
And at length he produced THE PHILOSOPHER'S SCALES.

"What were they?" you ask. You shall presently see;  
These scales were not made to weigh sugar and tea.  
O no; for such properties wondrous had they,  
That qualities, feelings, and thoughts they could weigh,  
Together with articles small or immense,  
From mountains or planets to atoms of sense.

## JANE TAYLOR

Naught was there so bulky but there it would lay,  
And naught so ethereal but there it would stay,  
And naught so reluctant but in it must go:  
All which some examples more clearly will show.

The first thing he weighed was the head of Voltaire,  
Which retained all the wit that had ever been there.  
As a weight, he threw in the torn scrap of a leaf,  
Containing the prayer of the penitent thief;  
When the skull rose aloft with so sudden a spell  
That it bounced like a ball on the roof of the cell.

One time he put in Alexander the Great,  
With the garment that Dorcas had made for a weight;  
And though clad in armor from sandals to crown,  
The hero rose up, and the garment went down.

A long row of almshouses, amply endowed  
By a well-esteemed Pharisee, busy and proud,  
Next loaded one scale; while the other was pressed  
By those mites the poor widow dropped into the chest;  
Up flew the endowment, not weighing an ounce,  
And down, down the farthing-worth came with a  
bounce.

By further experiments (no matter how)  
He found that ten chariots weighed less than one plow;  
A sword with gilt trapping rose up in the scale,  
Though balanced by only a ten-penny nail;  
A shield and a helmet, a buckler and spear,  
Weighed less than a widow's uncrystallized tear.  
A lord and a lady went up at full sail,  
When a bee chanced to light on the opposite scale;  
Ten doctors, ten lawyers, two courtiers, one earl,

JANE TAYLOR

Ten counsellors' wigs, full of powder and curl,  
All heaped in one balance and swinging from thence,  
Weighed less than a few grains of candor and sense;  
A first-water diamond, with brilliants begirt,  
Than one good potato just washed from the dirt;  
Yet not mountains of silver and gold could suffice  
One pearl to outweigh,—'twas THE PEARL OF GREAT  
PRICE.

Last of all, the whole world was bowled in at the grate,  
With the soul of a beggar to serve for a weight,  
When the former sprang up with so strong a rebuff  
That it made a vast rent and escaped at the roof!  
When balanced in air, it ascended on high,  
And sailed up aloft, a balloon in the sky;  
While the scale with the soul in 't so mightily fell  
That it jerked the philosopher out of his cell.



REGINALD HEBER

ENGLAND, 1783-1826

*A Bow-Meeting Song*

'TWAS merry then in England  
    (Our ancient records tell)  
With Robin Hood and Little John  
    Who dwelt by down and dell;  
And yet we love the bold outlaw  
    Who braved a tyrant foe,  
Whose cheer was the deer,  
    And his only friend the bow!

'TWAS merry then in England  
    In autumn's dewy morn,  
When echo started from her hill  
    To hear the bugle-horn.  
And beauty, mirth, and warrior worth  
    In garb of green did go  
The shade to invade  
    With the arrow and the bow.

## LEIGH HUNT

ENGLAND, 1784-1859

SHELLEY, in a lyric letter, says of Hunt:

"One of those happy souls,  
Who are the salt of earth, and without whom  
The world would smell like what it is—a tomb."

*Abou Ben Adhem* is his most popular poem. On this slight foothold he is supported above the gulf of oblivion. He marked a moment in literature, the transition from the aristocracy to the democracy of letters. He was only a mortal, though he lived with the immortals (Shelley, Keats, Byron and Lamb were his contemporaries); and he does not deserve to be altogether lost in the crowd. He was a vagabond of literature, a hack of genius, who did much to popularize the love of poetry and letters in general among his fellow-countrymen. His anthologies, *Imagination and Fancy* and *Wit and Humor*, have rendered me great assistance in many ways.

### *Abou Ben Adhem*

A BOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase!)  
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,  
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
An Angel writing in a book of gold:  
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
And to the Presence in the room he said,  
"What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head,

## LEIGH HUNT

And with a look made of all sweet accord  
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord,"  
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"  
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerly still, and said, "I pray thee, then,  
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night  
It came again with a great wakening light,  
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed;  
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

### *The Dearest Poets*

WERE I to name, out of the times gone by,  
The poets dearest to me, I should say,  
Pulci for spirits, and a fine, free way;  
Chaucer for manners, and close, silent eye;  
Milton for classic taste, and harp strung high:  
Spenser for luxury and sweet, sylvan play;  
Horace for chatting with, from day to day;  
Shakespeare for all, but most, society.

But which take with me, could I take but one?  
Shakespeare—as long as I was unoppressed  
With the world's weight, making sad thoughts intenser:  
But did I wish, out of the common sun  
To lay a wounded heart in leafy rest,  
And dream of things far off and healing—Spenser.

LEIGH HUNT

*Jenny Kissed Me*

JENNY kissed me when we met,  
Jumping from the chair she sat in.  
Time, you thief! who love to get  
Sweets into your list, put that in.  
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad;  
Say that health and wealth have missed me;  
Say I'm growing old, but add—  
Jenny kissed me!

*Cupid Swallowed*

T'OTHER day, as I was twining  
Roses for a crown to dine in,  
What, of all things, midst the heap,  
Should I light on, fast asleep,  
But the little desperate elf,  
The tiny traitor—Love himself!  
By the wings I pinched him up  
Like a bee, and in a cup  
Of my wine I plunged and sank him;  
And what d'ye think I did?—I drank him!  
Faith, I thought him dead. Not he!  
There he lives with tenfold glee;  
And now, this moment, with his wings  
I feel him tickling my heart-strings.

## LEIGH HUNT

### *Jaffar*

**J**AFFAR, the Barmecide, the good vizier,  
The poor man's hope, the friend without a peer—  
Jaffar was dead, slain by a doom unjust;  
And guilty Haroun, sullen with mistrust  
Of what the good, and even the bad, might say,  
Ordained that no man living, from that day,  
Should dare to speak his name on pain of death.  
All Araby and Persia held their breath;  
All but the brave Mondeer: he, proud to show  
How far for love a grateful soul could go,  
And facing death for very scorn and grief  
(For his great heart wanted a great relief)  
Stood forth in Bagdad, daily, in the square  
Where once had stood a happy house, and there  
Harangued the tremblers at the scimitar  
On all they owed to the divine Jaffar.

"Bring me this man," the caliph cried; the man  
Was brought, was gazed upon. The mutes began  
To bind his arms. "Welcome, brave cords," cried he,  
"From bonds far worse Jaffar delivered me;  
From wants, from shames, from loveless household  
fears;  
Made a man's eyes friends with delicious tears;  
Restored me, loved me, put me on a par  
With his great self. How can I pay Jaffar?"

Haroun, who felt that on a soul like this  
The mightiest vengeance could but fall amiss,  
Now deigned to smile, as one great lord of fate  
Might smile upon another half as great.

## LEIGH HUNT

He said, "Let worth grow frenzied if it will;  
The caliph's judgment shall be master still.  
Go, and since gifts so move thee, take this gem,  
The richest in the Tartar's diadem,  
And hold the giver as thou deemest fit!"  
"Gifts!" cried the friend; he took and holding it,  
High toward the heavens, as though to meet his star,  
Exclaimed, "This, too, I owe to thee, Jaffar!"

### *The Grasshopper and the Cricket*

*It is related that Hunt and Keats each wrote a sonnet on this subject during one evening. While Hunt's is not a great sonnet, it is one of his best achievements. Keats wrote an equally good sonnet, but one that pales by comparison with his best work.*

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,  
Catching your heart up at the feel of June—  
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon  
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;  
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class  
With those who think the candles come too soon,  
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune  
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass!

O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,  
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,  
Both have your sunshine: both, though small, are strong  
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth  
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—  
In doors and out, summer and winter, mirth.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

SCOTLAND, 1784-1842

*A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea*

A WET sheet and a flowing sea,  
A wind that follows fast,  
And fills the white and rustling sail,  
And bends the gallant mast—  
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,  
While, like the eagle free,  
Away the good ship flies, and leaves  
Old England on the lee.

“O for a soft and gentle mind!”  
I heard a fair one cry;  
But give to me the snoring breeze  
And white waves heaving high—  
And white waves heaving high, my boys,  
The good ship tight and free;  
The world of waters is our home,  
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornèd moon,  
And lightning in yon cloud;  
And hark the music, mariners!  
The wind is piping loud—  
The wind is piping loud, my boys,  
The lightning flashing free;  
While the hollow oak our palace is,  
Our heritage the sea.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

*The Spring of the Year*

GONE were but the winter cold,  
And gone were but the snow,  
I could sleep in the wild woods  
Where primroses blow.

Cold's the snow at my head,  
And cold at my feet;  
And the finger of death's at my e'en,  
Closing them to sleep.

Let none tell my father  
Or my mother so dear:  
I'll meet them both in heaven  
At the spring of the year.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

ENGLAND, 1785-1866

ARTHUR SYMONS says: "Peacock's learned wit, his satire upon the vulgarity of progress, are more continuously present in his prose than in his verse. \* \* \* They are like no other verse: they are startling, grotesque, full of hearty extravagances, at times thrilling with unexpected beauty. The masterpiece, perhaps, \* \* \* is *The War-Song of Dinas Vawr*, which is, as the author says in due commendation of it, 'the quintessence of all war-songs that ever were written, and the sum and substance of all the tendencies and consequences of the military.' \* \* \* Was comic verse ever more august?" And did the tooth of satire ever bite more deeply into the horror of war?



THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

*The War-Song of Dinas Vawr*

THE mountain sheep are sweeter,  
But the valley sheep are fatter;  
We therefore deemed it meet  
To carry off the latter.  
We made an expedition;  
We met an host and quelled it;  
We forced a strong position,  
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,  
Where herds of kine were browsing,  
We made a mighty sally,  
To furnish our carousing.  
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;  
We met them and o'erthrew them:  
They struggled hard to beat us,  
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,  
The king marched forth to catch us:  
His rage surpassed all measure,  
But his people could not match us.  
He fled to his hall-pillars;  
And, ere our force we led off,  
Some sacked his house and cellars,  
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,  
Spilt blood enough to swim in:  
We orphaned many children  
And widowed many women.  
The eagles and the ravens

## THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

We gluttoned with our foemen—  
The heroes and the cravens,  
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,  
And much their land bemoaned them,  
Two thousand head of cattle  
And the head of him who owned them.  
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,  
His head was borne before us;  
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,  
And his overthrow, our chorus.

### *The Grave of Love*

I DUG, beneath the cypress shade,  
What well might seem an elfin's grave;  
And every pledge in earth I laid,  
That erst thy false affection gave.

I pressed them down the sod beneath;  
I placed one mossy stone above;  
And twined the rose's fading wreath  
Around the sepulchre of love.

Frail as thy love, the flowers were dead  
Ere yet the evening sun was set;  
But years shall see the cypress spread,  
Immutable as my regret.

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

ENGLAND, 1787-1855

*Rienzi to the Romans*

FRIENDS!

I come not here to talk. Ye know too well  
The story of our thralldom. We are slaves!  
The bright sun rises to his course, and lights  
A race of slaves! he sets, and his last beam  
Falls on a slave! Not such as, swept along  
By the full tide of power, the conqueror leads  
To crimson glory and undying fame,  
But base, ignoble slaves!—slaves to a horde  
Of petty tyrants, feudal despots; lords  
Rich in some dozen paltry villages,  
Strong in some hundred spearmen, only great  
In that strange spell—a name! Each hour, dark fraud,  
Or open rapine, or protected murder,  
Cries out against them. But this very day  
An honest man, my neighbor—there he stands—  
Was struck—struck like a dog—by one who wore  
The badge of Ursini! because, forsooth,  
He tossed not high his ready cap in air,  
Nor lifted up his voice in servile shouts,  
At sight of that great ruffian! Be we men,  
And suffer such dishonor? men, and wash not  
The stain away in blood? Such shames are common.  
I have known deeper wrongs. I, that speak to ye—  
I had a brother once, a gracious boy,  
Full of all gentleness, of calmest hope,  
Of sweet and quiet joy; there was the look  
Of Heaven upon his face which limners give  
To the beloved disciple. How I loved

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

That gracious boy! younger by fifteen years,  
Brother at once and son! He left my side—  
A summer bloom on his fair cheeks, a smile  
Parting his innocent lips. In one short hour  
The pretty, harmless boy was slain! I saw  
The corse, the mangled corse, and then I cried  
For vengeance! Rouse ye, Romans! Rouse ye, slaves!  
Have ye brave sons?—Look in the next fierce brawl  
To see them die! Have ye fair daughters?—Look  
To see them live, torn from your arms, distained,  
Dishonored; and, if ye dare call for justice,  
Be answered by the lash! Yet this is Rome,  
That sat on her seven hills, and from her throne  
Of beauty ruled the world! Yet we are Romans!  
Why, in that elder day, to be a Roman  
Was greater than a king! And once again—  
Hear me, ye walls, that echoed to the tread  
Of either Brutus!—once again, I swear,  
The eternal city shall be free!

“BARRY CORNWALL” (BRYAN WALLER  
PROCTOR)

ENGLAND, 1787-1874

*The Blood Horse*

GAMARRA is a dainty steed,  
Strong, black, and of a noble breed,  
Full of fire, and full of bone,  
With all his line of fathers known;  
Fine his nose, his nostrils thin,  
But blown abroad by the pride within!  
His mane is like a river flowing,

## BARRY CORNWALL

And his eyes like embers glowing  
In the darkness of the night,  
And his pace as swift as light.

Look—how round his straining throat  
Grace and shifting beauty float;  
Sinewy strength is in his reins,  
And the red blood gallops through his veins;  
Richer, redder, never ran  
Through the boasting heart of man.  
He can trace his lineage higher  
Than the Bourbon dare aspire—  
Douglas, Guzman, or the Guelph,  
Or O'Brien's blood itself!

He, who hath no peer, was born  
Here, upon a red March morn;  
But his famous fathers dead  
Were Arabs all, and Arab-bred,  
And the last of that great line  
Trode like one of a race divine!  
And yet, he was but friend to one,  
Who fed him at the set of sun  
By some lone fountain fringed with green;  
With him, a roving Bedouin,  
He lived (none else would he obey  
Through all the hot Arabian day)  
And died untamed upon the sands  
Where Balkh amidst the desert stands!

BARRY CORNWALL

*A Petition to Time*

*This lyric was written on the poet's arrival in America. It touched the heart of the people, and the newspapers carried it to all firesides.*

TOUCH us gently, Time!  
Let us glide adown thy stream  
Gently—as we sometimes glide  
Through a quiet dream!  
Humble voyagers are We,  
Husband, wife and children three—  
(One is lost—an angel, fled  
To the azure overhead!)

Touch us gently, Time!  
We've not proud nor soaring wings;  
Our ambition, our content  
Lies in simple things.  
Humble voyagers are We,  
O'er Life's dim unsounded sea,  
Seeking only some calm clime:  
Touch us gently, gentle Time!

*The Owl*

IN the hollow tree, in the old gray tower,  
The spectral owl doth dwell;  
Dull, hated, despised, in the sunshine hour,  
But at dusk he's abroad and well!  
Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him;  
All mock him outright by day;  
But at night, when the woods grow still and dim,  
The boldest will shrink away!

## BARRY CORNWALL

*O, when the night falls, and roosts the fowl,  
Then, then, is the reign of the hornèd owl!*

And the owl hath a bride, who is fond and bold,  
And loveth the wood's deep gloom;  
And, with eyes like the shine of the moonstone cold,  
She awaiteth her ghastly groom:  
Not a feather she moves, not a carol she sings,  
As she waits in her tree so still;  
But when her heart heareth his flapping wings,  
She hoots out her welcome shrill!  
*O, when the moon shines, and dogs do howl,  
Then, then, is the joy of the hornèd owl!*

Mourn not for the owl, nor his gloomy plight!  
The owl hath his share of good:  
If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,  
He is lord in the dark greenwood!  
Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghastly mate,  
They are each unto each a pride:  
Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange, dark fate  
Hath rent them from all beside!  
*So when the night falls, and dogs do howl,  
Sing, ho! for the reign of the hornèd owl!  
We know not alway  
Who are kings by day,  
But the king of the night is the bold brown owl!*

## GEORGE GORDON BYRON, LORD BYRON

ENGLAND, 1788-1824

SOME early verses which Byron published in 1806 were suppressed. They were followed in 1807 by *Hours of Idleness*, which was savagely attacked by the *Edinburgh Review*. His reply was the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a masterpiece of satirical nomenclature. At this time, Byron left England, and during an absence of two years wrote the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, which were published in 1812 and were received with acclamation. In his own words, he awoke one morning and found himself famous. This poem, here and there ablaze with Nature—her storms, her shadows, her serenities; and the sentiment, now morbid, now jubilant—is always his own, though it beguiles with honeyed passages or stabs like a knife. His *Don Juan*, the first two cantos of which have been described as his masterpiece, followed in 1819 and was hailed with mingled abuse and acclaim. It has questionable passages: he sometimes enspheres a villain in a blaze of diction.

As a boy I was, like Tennyson, an enormous admirer of Byron. Tennyson says: "I was fourteen when I heard of his death. It seemed an awful calamity; I remember I rushed out of doors, sat down by myself, shouted aloud, and wrote on the standstone: '*Byron is dead!*'"

Byron's final position in English literature is not yet wholly settled. His fame was at its apex in his own generation. Yet his energy, passion, and power of vivid, richly-colored description, together with the interest attaching to his romantic career, must always make him loom large among English writers.

Taine tells us that "Byron does not invent, he observes; he does not create, he transcribes." His poetry is the exposition of his own sorrows, his own revolts, his own



## LORD BYRON

dreams. Thus it can be said that he projected over Europe "the pageant of his bleeding heart."

Life was to him fever and torture: he knew "the worm, the canker and the grief." He was a stormy spirit—all originality and volcanic energy—a tumultuous genius, not so much a poet of the individual as a poet of the universe. And all his stormy passion is voiced in a style that is free, intense, affluent, dynamic, melodious.

Browning and Carlyle were of the same mind in predicting that Byron would have been a poet of the noblest and highest order had he lived a few years longer. As it is, his poetry reveals an unbridled satirist and a man of sentiment, an aristocrat and a radical, an exponent of sublimity and sensuality—"half dust, half deity"—to use his own phrase. The key to his eccentricities is to be found in his heredity, his disordered life, his headlong passions.

But he also had nobilities in him. The Italian patriot Mazzini bears this testimony: "The day will come when Democracy will remember all that it owes to Byron. . . . From him dates the sympathy of all the true-hearted amongst us for this land of liberty, whose true vocation he so worthily represented among the oppressed."

### *When We Two Parted*

WHEN we two parted  
In silence and tears,  
Half broken-hearted  
To sever for years,  
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,  
Colder thy kiss;  
Truly that hour foretold  
Sorrow to this.

## LORD BYRON

The dew of the morning  
Sunk chill on my brow—  
It felt like the warning  
Of what I feel now.  
Thy vows are all broken,  
And light is thy fame:  
I hear thy name spoken,  
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,  
A knell to mine ear;  
A shudder comes o'er me—  
Why wert thou so dear?  
They know not I knew thee,  
Who knew thee too well:  
Long, long shall I rue thee,  
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—  
In silence I grieve,  
That thy heart could forget,  
Thy spirit deceive.  
If I should meet thee  
After long years,  
How should I greet thee?  
With silence and tears.

LORD BYRON

*Man's Love*

FROM "DON JUAN"

MAN'S love is of man's life a thing apart,  
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range  
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;  
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange  
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,  
And few there are whom these cannot estrange;  
Men have all these resources, we but one,  
To love again, and be again undone.

*The Love of Women*

FROM "DON JUAN"

ALAS! the love of women! it is known  
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;  
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,  
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring  
To them but mockeries of the past alone,  
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,  
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real  
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,  
Is always so to women; one sole bond  
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;  
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond  
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust  
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?  
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,  
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over.

## LORD BYRON

*John Keats*

FROM "DON JUAN"

*The entirely false idea that Keats fell into a decline and died as a result of the severe criticism on his "Endymion" in the "Quarterly Review", was shared by Shelley and Byron, and was generally prevalent until the publication of Milnes' "Life of Keats."*

JOHN KEATS, who was killed off by one critique,  
Just as he really promised something great,  
If not intelligible, without Greek  
Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,  
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.  
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;  
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,  
Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.

*From "The Isles of Greece"*

FROM "DON JUAN"

THE isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!  
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,  
Where grew the arts of war and peace,  
Where Delos rose, and Phæbus sprung!  
Eternal summer gilds them yet,  
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,  
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,  
Have found the fame your shores refuse:  
Their place of birth alone is mute  
To sounds which echo further west  
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

LORD BYRON

The mountains look on Marathon—  
And Marathon looks on the sea;  
And musing there an hour alone,  
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;  
For standing on the Persians' grave,  
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow  
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;  
And ships, by thousands, lay below,  
And men in nations—all were his!  
He counted them at break of day—  
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,  
My country? On thy voiceless shore  
The heroic lay is tuneless now—  
The heroic bosom beats no more!  
And must thy lyre, so long divine,  
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something in the dearth of fame,  
Though linked among a fettered race,  
To feel at least a patriot's shame,  
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;  
For what is left the poet here?  
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?  
Must *we* but blush? Our fathers bled.  
Earth! render back from out thy breast  
A remnant of our Spartan dead!  
Of the three hundred grant but three,  
To make a new Thermopylæ!

LORD BYRON

What, silent still? and silent all?  
Ah! no—the voices of the dead  
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,  
And answer, "Let one living head,  
But one, arise—we come, we come!"  
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

*The Destruction of Sennacherib*

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew  
still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

## LORD BYRON

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

### *Chillon*

**E**TERNAL Spirit of the chainless mind!  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art;  
For there thy habitation is the heart,  
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;  
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned,  
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,  
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.  
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,  
And thy sad floor an altar, for 'twas trod,  
Until his very steps have left a trace  
Worn as if thy cold pavements were a sod,  
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface,  
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

### *Oh! Snatched Away in Beauty's Bloom*

**O**H, snatched away in beauty's bloom!  
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb!  
But on thy turf shall roses rear  
Their leaves, the earliest of the year,

## LORD BYRON

And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom;  
And oft by yon blue gushing stream  
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,  
And feed deep thought with many a dream,  
And lingering pause and lightly tread;  
Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,  
That Death nor heeds nor hears distress:  
Will this unteach us to complain?  
Or make one mourner weep the less?  
And thou, who tell'st me to forget,  
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

### *Stanzas to Augusta*

*This poem should rank high in the Byronic reliquary. Poe appraises it justly: "Although the rhythm here is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler theme ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman."*

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,  
And the star of my fate hath declined,  
Thy soft heart refused to discover  
The faults which so many could find.  
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
It shrunk not to share it with me,  
And the love which my spirit hath painted  
It never hath found but in thee.

Then when nature around me is smiling,  
The last smile which answers to mine,



## LORD BYRON

I do not believe it beguiling,  
Because it reminds me of thine;  
And when winds are at war with the ocean,  
As the breasts I believed in with me,  
If their billows excite an emotion,  
It is that they bear me from thee.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,  
And its fragments are sunk in the wave;  
Though I feel that my soul is delivered  
To pain—it shall not be its slave.  
There is many a pang to pursue me:  
They may crush, but they shall not contemn—  
They may torture, but shall not subdue me—  
'Tis of thee that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,  
Though woman, thou didst not forsake;  
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me;  
Though slandered, thou never couldst shake;  
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me;  
Though parted, it was not to fly;  
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,  
Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,  
Nor the war of the many with one—  
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,  
'Twas folly not sooner to shun;  
And if dearly that error hath cost me,  
And more than I once could foresee,  
I have found that, whatever it lost me,  
It could not deprive me of thee.

LORD BYRON

From the wreck of the past which hath perished  
Thus much I at least may recall:  
It hath taught me that what I most cherished  
Deserved to be dearest of all.  
In the desert a fountain is springing,  
In the wild waste there still is a tree,  
And a bird in the solitude singing,  
Which speaks to my spirit of thee.

*From "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers"*

*In 1809, Byron published this famous satire, which ran through many editions. In 1816, he had the high-mindedness to disavow his belittlement of such men as Coleridge and Wordsworth, saying he regretted that he was not able to consign "this miserable record of misplaced anger and indiscriminate acrimony to the flames." I give you a taste of the satire.*

**P**REPARE for rhyme—I'll publish, right or wrong:  
Fools are my theme, let satire be my song.

A man must serve his time to every trade  
Save censure—critics all are ready-made.  
Take hackneyed jokes from Miller, got by rote,  
With just enough of learning to misquote.

With eagle pinion soaring to the skies,  
Behold the ballad-monger Southey rise!  
To him let Camoëns, Milton, Tasso yield,  
Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field.  
First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,

## LORD BYRON

The scourge of England and the boast of France!  
The burnt by wicked Bedford for a witch,  
Behold her statue placed in glory's niche:  
Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,  
A virgin phoenix from her ashes risen.  
Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,  
Arabia's monstrous, wild and wondrous son;  
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew  
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.  
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,  
For ever reign—the rival of Tom Thumb!

There be, who say, in these enlightened days,  
That splendid lies are all the poet's praise;  
That strained invention, ever on the wing,  
Alone impels the modern bard to sing:  
'Tis true, that all who rhyme—nay, all who write,  
Shrink from that fatal word to genius—trite;  
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires  
And decorate the verse herself inspires:  
This fact in Virtue's name let Crabbe attest;  
Thou nature's sternest painter, yet the best.

### *The Coliseum*

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE"

ARCHES on arches! as it were that Rome,  
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,  
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,  
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine  
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine  
Should be the light which streams here to illumine  
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine

## LORD BYRON

Of contemplation; and the azure gloom  
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,  
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,  
And shadows forth its glory. There is given  
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,  
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant  
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power  
And magic in the ruined battlement,  
For which the palace of the present hour  
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,  
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,  
As man was slaughtered by his fellowman.  
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because  
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,  
And the imperial pleasure. Wherefore not?  
What matters where we fall to fill the maws  
Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot?  
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—  
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch  
who won.

## LORD BYRON

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far away;  
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,  
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay:  
*There* were his young barbarians all at play,  
*There* was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,  
Butchered to make a Roman holiday.  
All this rushed with his blood. Shall he expire  
And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

### *The Ocean*

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE"

ROLL on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;  
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control  
Stops with the shore—upon the watery plain  
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,  
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,  
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls  
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,  
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,  
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make  
Their clay creator the vain title take  
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;  
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,  
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar  
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

## LORD BYRON

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—  
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?  
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,  
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey  
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay  
Has dried up realms to deserts—not so thou,  
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—  
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—  
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,  
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime—  
The image of Eternity—the throne  
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime  
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone  
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

### *The Eve of Waterloo*

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE"

THERE was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium's capital had gathered then  
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men:  
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when  
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,  
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;  
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

## LORD BYRON

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,  
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;  
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;  
No sleep till morn, when youth and pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet. . . .

But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,  
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;

And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!

Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,

And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,

And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago

Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;

And there were sudden partings, such as press

The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs

Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess

If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,

Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

And there was mounting in hot haste; the steed,

The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,

Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,

And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;

And the deep thunder peal on peal afar,

And near, the beat of the alarming drum

Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;

While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,

Or whispering with white lips—"The foe! They come!  
they come!"

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,

Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,

LORD BYRON

Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,  
Over the unreturning brave—alas!  
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass,  
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow  
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass  
Of living valor, rolling on the foe  
And burning with high hope, shall molder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,  
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,  
The morn, the marshalling in arms—the day,  
Battle's magnificently stern array!  
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent,  
The earth is covered thick with other clay,  
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,  
Rider and horse, friend, foe, in one red burial blent.

*From "Manfred"*

THE stars are forth, the moon above the tops  
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!  
I linger yet with Nature, for the night  
Hath been to me a more familiar face  
Than that of man; and in her starry shade  
Of dim and solitary loveliness,  
I learned the language of another world.  
I do remember me, that in my youth,  
When I was wandering—upon such a night  
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,  
'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;



## LORD BYRON

The trees which grew along the broken arches  
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars  
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar  
The watch-dog bayed beyond the Tiber; and  
More near from out the Cæsar's palace came  
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,  
Of distant sentinels the fitful song  
Began and died upon the gentle wind.  
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach  
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood  
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars dwelt,  
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst  
A grove which springs through levelled battlements,  
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,  
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;  
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,  
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!  
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,  
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.  
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon  
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,  
Which softened down the hoar austerity  
Of rugged desolation, and filled up,  
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;  
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,  
And making that which was not, till the place  
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er  
With silent worship of the great of old!—  
The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns.

LORD BYRON

*My Boat Is on the Shore*

MY boat is on the shore,  
And my bark is on the sea:  
But, before I go, Tom Moore,  
Here's a double health to thee!

Here's a sigh to those that love me,  
And a smile to those who hate;  
And, whatever sky's above me,  
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,  
Yet it shall yet bear me on;  
Though a desert should surround me,  
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,  
As I gasped upon the brink,  
Ere my fainting spirit fell,  
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water as this wine,  
The libation I would pour  
Should be: "Peace with thine and mine,  
And a health to thee, Tom Moore!"

## LORD BYRON

### *The Dream*

*Here we have Byron's story of his impassioned but tragic affection for Mary Chaworth. It has in it the wild heart of the poet at one of his noblest moments.*

*Poe reminds us of a beautiful fact: "In every allusion made by Byron to his passion for Mary Chaworth, there was a vein of almost spiritual tenderness and purity, strangely in contrast with the gross earthliness pervading and disfiguring his ordinary love poems. 'The Dream' \* \* \* has never been excelled (certainly never excelled by him) in the blended fervor, delicacy, truthfulness and utter ethereality which sublimates and adorn it."*

*And I may say that this powerful poem laid a strange enchantment upon all my romantic boyhood.*

OUR life is twofold; sleep hath its own world,  
A boundary between the things misnamed  
Death and existence: sleep hath its own world,  
And a wide realm of wild reality,  
And dreams in their development have breath,  
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy;  
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,  
They take a weight from off our waking toils,  
They do divide our being; they become  
A portion of ourselves as of our time,  
And look like heralds of eternity;  
They pass like spirits of the past—they speak  
Like sibyls of the future; they have power—  
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;  
They make us what we were not—what they will,  
And shake us with the vision that's gone by,  
The dread of vanished shadows. Are they so?  
Is not the past all shadow? What are they?  
Creations of the mind? The mind can make

## LORD BYRON

Substances, and people planets of its own  
With beings brighter than have been, and give  
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.  
I would recall a vision which I dreamed  
Perchance in sleep—for in itself a thought,  
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,  
And curdles a long life into one hour.

I saw two beings in the hues of youth  
Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,  
Green and of a mild declivity, the last  
As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such,  
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,  
But a most living landscape, and the wave  
Of woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men  
Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke  
Arising from such rustic roofs; the hill  
Was crowned with a peculiar diadem  
Of trees, in circular array, so fixed,  
Not by the sport of nature, but of man:  
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there  
Gazing—the one on all that was beneath  
Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her;  
And both were young, and one was beautiful;  
And both were young—yet not alike in youth.  
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,  
The maid was on the eve of womanhood;  
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart  
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye  
There was but one beloved face on earth,  
And that was shining on him; he had looked  
Upon it till it could not pass away;  
He had no breath, no being, but in hers;  
She was his voice; he did not speak to her,  
But trembled on her words; she was his sight,

## LORD BYRON

For his eye followed hers, and saw with hers,  
Which colored all his objects; he had ceased  
To live within himself: she was his life,  
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,  
Which terminated all; upon a tone,  
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,  
And his cheek change tempestuously—his heart  
Unknowing of its cause of agony.  
But she in these fond feelings had no share:  
Her sighs were not for him; to her he was  
Even as a brother—but no more: 'twas much,  
For brotherless she was, save in the name  
Her infant friendship had bestowed on him;  
Herself the solitary scion left  
Of a time-honored race. It was a name  
Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not—and why?  
Time taught him a deep answer—when she loved  
Another; even *now* she loved another,  
And on the summit of that hill she stood,  
Looking afar if yet her lover's steed  
Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
There was an ancient mansion, and before  
Its walls there was a steed caparisoned;  
Within an antique oratory stood  
The boy of whom I spake; he was alone,  
And pale, and pacing to and fro: anon  
He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced  
Words which I could not guess of; then he leaned  
His bowed head on his hands and shook, as 'twere  
With a convulsion—then arose again,  
And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear  
What he had written, but he shed no tears,  
And he did calm himself, and fix his brow

## LORD BYRON

Into a kind of quiet; as he paused,  
The lady of his love re-entered there;  
She was serene and smiling then, and yet  
She knew she was by him beloved; she knew—  
For quickly comes such knowledge—that his heart  
Was darkened with her shadow, and she saw  
That he was wretched, but she saw not all.  
He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp  
He took her hand; a moment o'er his face  
A tablet of unutterable thoughts  
Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;  
He dropped the hand he held, and with slow steps  
Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,  
For they did part with mutual smiles; he passed  
From out the massy gate of that old Hall,  
And mounting on his steed he went his way;  
And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The boy was sprung to manhood; in the wilds  
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,  
And his soul drank their sunbeams; he was girt  
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not  
Himself like what he had been; on the sea  
And on the shore he was a wanderer;  
There was a mass of many images  
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was  
A part of all; and in the last he lay  
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,  
Couched among fallen columns, in the shade  
Of ruined walls that had survived the names  
Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side  
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds  
Were fastened near a fountain; and a man,  
Clad in a flowing garb, did watch the while,

## LORD BYRON

While many of his tribe slumbered around:  
And they were canopied by the blue sky,  
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,  
That God alone was to be seen in heaven.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The lady of his love was wed with one  
Who did not love her better: in her home,  
A thousand leagues from his, her native home,  
She dwelt, begirt with growing infancy,  
Daughters and sons of beauty—but behold!  
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,  
The settled shadow of an inward strife,  
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,  
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.  
What could her grief be? She had all she loved,  
And he who had so loved her was not there  
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,  
Or ill-repressed affliction, her pure thoughts.  
What could her grief be? She had loved him not,  
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,  
Nor could he be a part of that which preyed  
Upon her mind—a specter of the past.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The wanderer was returned. I saw him stand  
Before an altar—with a gentle bride;  
Her face was fair, but was not that which made  
The starlight of his boyhood—as he stood  
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came  
The selfsame aspect and the quivering shock  
That in the antique oratory shook  
His bosom in its solitude; and then—  
As in that hour—a moment o'er his face  
The tablet of unutterable thoughts

## LORD BYRON

Was traced—and then it faded as it came,  
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke  
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,  
And all things reeled around him; he could see  
Not that which was, nor that which should have been,  
But the old mansion, and the accustomed hall,  
And the remembered chambers, and the place,  
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,  
All things pertaining to that place and hour,  
And her who was his destiny, came back  
And thrust themselves between him and the light;  
What business had they there at such a time?

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The lady of his love—oh, she was changed,  
As by the sickness of the soul! her mind  
Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes,  
They had not their own luster, but the look  
Which is not of the earth; she was become  
The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts  
Were combinations of disjointed things,  
And forms impalpable and unperceived  
Of others' sight familiar were to hers.  
And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise  
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance  
Of melancholy is a fearful gift;  
What is it but the telescope of truth,  
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,  
And brings life near in utter nakedness,  
Making the cold reality too real!

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The wanderer was alone as heretofore,  
The beings which surrounded him were gone,  
Or were at war with him; he was a mark



## LORD BYRON

For blight and desolation, compassed round  
With hatred and contention; pain was mixed  
In all which was served up to him, until,  
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,  
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,  
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived  
Through that which had been death to many men,  
And made him friends of mountains: with the stars  
And the quick Spirit of the universe  
He held his dialogues; and they did teach  
To him the magic of their mysteries;  
To him the book of Night was opened wide,  
And voices from the deep abyss revealed  
A marvel and a secret. Be it so.

My dream was past; it had no further change.  
It was of a strange order, that the doom  
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out  
Almost like a reality—the one  
To end in madness—both in misery.

### *Darkness*

I HAD a dream, which was not all a dream.  
The bright sun was extinguished; and the stars  
Did wander, darkling, in the eternal space,  
Rayless and pathless, and the icy earth  
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air.  
Morn came, and went—and came, and brought no day,  
And men forgot their passions, in the dread  
Of this their desolation; and all hearts  
Were chilled into a selfish prayer for light.  
And they did live by watch-fires; and the thrones,

## LORD BYRON

The palaces of crownèd kings, the huts,  
The habitations of all things which dwell,  
Were burnt for beacons: cities were consumed,  
And men were gathered round their blazing homes,  
To look once more into each other's face.  
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye  
Of the volcanoes and their mountain torch.

A fearful hope was all the world contained:  
Forests were set on fire; but, hour by hour,  
They fell and faded; and the crackling trunks  
Extinguished with a crash—and all was black.  
The brows of men, by the despairing light,  
Wore an unearthly aspect, as, by fits,  
The flashes fell upon them. Some lay down,  
And hid their eyes, and wept; and some did rest  
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;  
And others hurried to and fro, and fed  
Their funeral piles with fuel, and looked up,  
With mad disquietude, on the dull sky,  
The pall of a past world; and then again  
With curses, cast them down upon the dust,  
And gnashed their teeth, and howled. The wild birds  
shrieked,  
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,  
And flap their useless wings: the wildest brutes  
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawled  
And twined themselves among the multitude,  
Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for food.

And War, which for a moment was no more,  
Did glut himself again: a meal was bought  
With blood, and each sat sullenly apart,  
Gorging himself in gloom; no love was left;  
All earth was but one thought—and that was death,

## LORD BYRON

Immediate and inglorious; and the pang  
Of famine fed upon all entrails. Men  
Died; and their bones were tombless as their flesh;  
The meager by the meager were devoured.  
Even dogs assailed their masters—all save one,  
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept  
The birds, and beasts, and famished men at bay,  
Till hunger clung them, or the drooping dead  
Lured their lank jaws: himself sought out no food,  
But, with a piteous, and perpetual moan,  
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand  
Which answered not with a caress—he died.

The crowd was famished by degrees. But two  
Of an enormous city did survive,  
And they were enemies. They met beside  
The dying embers of an altar-place,  
Where had been heaped a mass of holy things  
For an unholy usage. They raked up,  
And, shivering, scraped with their cold, skeleton hands,  
The feeble ashes; and their feeble breath  
Blew for a little life, and made a flame,  
Which was a mockery. Then they lifted  
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld  
Each other's aspects—saw, and shrieked, and died;  
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,  
Unknowing who he was, upon whose brow  
Famine had written Fiend.

The world was void:

The populous and the powerful was a lump,  
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless;  
A lump of death, a chaos of hard clay.  
The rivers, lakes and ocean, all stood still,  
And nothing stirred within their silent depths.

## LORD BYRON

Ships, sailorless, lay rotting on the sea,  
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropped  
They slept on the abyss, without a surge;  
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave;  
The moon, their mistress, had expired before;  
The winds were withered in the stagnant air,  
And the clouds perished: Darkness had no need  
Of aid from them—she was the universe.

### *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte*

'TIS done—but yesterday a King!  
And armed with Kings to strive—  
And now thou art a nameless thing;  
So abject—yet alive!  
Is this the man of thousand thrones,  
Who strewed our earth with hostile bones?  
And can he thus survive?  
Since, he, miscalled the Morning Star,  
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind  
Who bowed so low the knee?  
By gazing on thyself grown blind,  
Thou taught'st the rest to see.  
With might unquestioned—power to save;  
Thine only gift hath been the grave,  
To those that worshipped thee;  
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess  
Ambition's less than littleness!

Thanks for that lesson—it will teach  
To after warriors more  
Than high Philosophy can preach,

## LORD BYRON

And vainly preached before.  
That spell upon the minds of men  
Breaks, never to unite again,  
That led them to adore  
Those Pagod things of sabre sway,  
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

The triumph, and the vanity,  
The rapture of the strife—  
The earthquake voice of Victory,  
To thee the breath of life;  
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway  
Which man seemed made but to obey,  
Wherewith renown was rife—  
All quelled!—Dark Spirit! what must be  
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolator desolate!  
The Victor overthrown  
The arbiter of others' fate  
A suppliant for his own!  
Is it some yet imperial hope,  
That with such change can calmly cope?  
Or dread of death alone?  
To die a prince—or live a slave—  
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

He who of old would rend the oak,  
Dreamed not of the rebound;  
Chained by the trunk he vainly broke—  
Alone—how looked he round?  
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,  
An equal deed hast done at length,  
And darker fate hast found;

## LORD BYRON

He fell, the forest prowler's prey:  
But thou must eat thy heart away!

The Roman, when his burning heart,  
Was slaked with blood of Rome,  
Threw down the dagger—dared depart,  
    In savage grandeur, home—  
He dared depart in utter scorn  
Of men that such a yoke had borne,  
    Yet left him such a doom!  
His only glory was that hour  
Of self-upheld abandoned power.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway  
    Had lost its quickening spell,  
Cast crowns for rosaries away,  
    An empire for a cell;  
A strict accountant of his beads,  
A subtle disputant on creeds,  
    His dotage trifled well:  
Yet better had he neither known  
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

But thou—from thy reluctant hand  
    The thunderbolt is wrung—  
Too late thou leav'st the high command  
    To which thy weakness clung;  
All Evil Spirit as thou art,  
It is enough to grieve the heart  
    To see thine own unstrung;  
To think that God's fair world hath been  
The footstool of a thing so mean!

## LORD BYRON

And earth hath spilt her blood for him,  
Who thus can hoard his own!  
And Monarchs bowed the trembling limb,  
And thanked him for a throne!  
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,  
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear  
In humblest guise have shown.  
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind  
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,  
Nor written thus in vain—  
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,  
Or deepen every stain:  
If thou hadst died as honor dies,  
Some new Napoleon might arise,  
To shame the world again—  
But who would soar the solar height,  
To set in such a starless night?

Weighed in the balance, hero dust  
Is vile as vulgar clay;  
Thy scales, Mortality! are just  
To all that pass away:  
But yet methought the living great  
Some higher sparks should animate,  
To dazzle and dismay;  
Nor deemed Contempt could thus make mirth  
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,  
Thy still imperial bride;  
How bears her breast the torturing hour?  
Still clings she to thy side?  
Must she, too, bend—must she, too, share,

## LORD BYRON

Thy late repentance, long despair,  
Thou throneless Homicide?  
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem;  
'Tis worth thy vanished diadem!

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,  
And gaze upon the sea:  
That element may meet thy smile—  
It ne'er was ruled by thee!  
Or trace with thine all idle hand,  
In loitering mood upon the sand,  
That Earth is now as free!  
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now,  
Transferred his by-word to thy brow.

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage—  
What thoughts will there be thine,  
While brooding in thy prisoned rage?  
But one—"The world *was* mine!"  
Unless, like he of Babylon,  
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,  
Life will not long confine  
That spirit poured so widely forth—  
So long obeyed—so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,  
Wilt thou withstand the shock?  
And share with him, the unforgiven,  
His vulture and his rock?  
Foredoomed by God—by man accurst,  
And that last act, though not thy worst,  
The very Fiend's arch mock!  
He, in his fall preserved his pride,  
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!



## LORD BYRON

There was a day—there was an hour,  
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—  
When that immeasurable power,  
Unsated, to resign,  
Had been an act of purer fame,  
Than gathers round Marengo's name,  
And gilded thy decline,  
Through the long twilight of all time,  
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

But thou, forsooth, must be a king,  
And don the purple vest,  
As if that foolish robe could wring  
Remembrance from thy breast.  
Where is the faded garment? where.  
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,  
The star—the string—the crest?  
Vain froward child of empire! say,  
Are all thy playthings snatched away?

Where may the wearied eye repose,  
When gazing on the Great,  
Where neither guilty glory glows,  
Nor despicable state?  
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—  
The Cincinnatus of the West,  
Whom envy dared not hate,  
Bequeath the name of Washington,  
To make man blush there was but one!

WILLIAM KNOX

ENGLAND, 1789-1825

*Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?*

*The following poem was a particular favorite with Abraham Lincoln. It was first shown to him when a young man by a friend, and afterwards he cut it from a newspaper and learned it by heart. He said to a friend, "I would give a great deal to know who wrote it, but have never been able to ascertain." He was told, in 1864.*

OH, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,  
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,  
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,  
Be scattered around and together be laid;  
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,  
Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved,  
The mother that infant's affection who proved;  
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,  
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

WILLIAM KNOX

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,  
Shone beauty and pleasure—her triumphs are by;  
And the memory of those who loved her and praised,  
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the scepter hath borne,  
The brow of the priest that the miter hath worn,  
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,  
Are hidden and lost in the depths of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,  
The herdsman who climbed with his goats up the steep,  
The beggar who wandered in search of his bread,  
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven,  
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,  
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,  
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

So the multitude goes, like the flower and the weed  
That wither away to let others succeed;  
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,  
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

For we are the same that our fathers have been;  
We see the same sights that our fathers have seen,  
We drink the same stream and view the same sun,  
And run the same course that our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;  
From the death we are shrinking from, they too would  
shrink,  
To the life we are clinging to, they too would cling;  
But it speeds from the earth, like a bird on the wing.

WILLIAM KNOX

They loved, but their story we cannot unfold;  
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;  
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will  
    come;  
They joyed, but the voice of their gladness is dumb.

They died—ay! they died: and we things that are now,  
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,  
Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,  
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea! hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,  
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;  
And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge,  
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,  
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,  
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—  
Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

CHARLES WOLFE

IRELAND, 1791-1823

*The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna*

JANUARY 16, 1809

*The author of this famous ode was an obscure Irish clergyman, who wrote no other poem of consequence. This one was written several years before it was published, without the knowledge of the poet, by a friend who had memorized it and brought about its publication. Almost immediately it took its place among the best martial poems in the language, preëminent for simplicity, patriotic fervor and manly pathos.*

NOT a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot  
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,  
The sods with our bayonets turning,  
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light  
And the lanthorn dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;  
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest  
With his martial cloak around him.

CHARLES WOLFE

Few and short were the prayers we said,  
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;  
But we steadfastly gazed on the face of the dead,  
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed  
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,  
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,  
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,  
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him—  
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on  
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done  
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;  
And we heard the distant and random gun  
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,  
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;  
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,  
But we left him alone with his glory.

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ENGLAND, 1792-1822

SHELLEY's first great poem was *Alastor*, and his two most extended works were the tragedy, *The Cenci*, and the dramatic poem, *Prometheus Unbound*. At his death he had only nineteen readers, but now he is one of the chief glories of the literary world.

He wreaked his thought upon expression. Nothing of his (as Poe tells us) is ever worked out: he errs sometimes by too much concision. His poetry seems not to be heard, but to be overhead. He seems always to be singing to his own spirit. In his higher moments he sings impulsively, earnestly, divinely: he swings out into the abandon of the gods.

In the *Ode to the Skylark*, he reveals the chain of lovely suggestions made by that music out of the empyrean. Here, as in the *Ode to the West Wind*, we have a rainbow of brilliance, a marshalling of edenic powers and processes. Shelley was responsive to the faintest moods and meanings of Nature, and his music met his thought as when the breeze and the Æolian harp whisper their ecstasy.

"Think," says De Quincey, "of the early misery which he suffered, of the gathering darkness upon which the phantasmagoria of all that was to come arranged itself in troubled phosphoric dreams, and in sweeping processions of woe! Yet, again, when one recurs to his gracious nature, his fearlessness, his truth, his purity from all fleshliness of appetite, his freedom from vanity, his diffusive love and tenderness, suddenly out of the darkness flashes a May morning, forests and thickets of roses advance to the foreground, from amid which looks out the eternal child."

Swinburne bears witness to Shelley's "adoration of the personal Jesus, combined as it was with an equal abhorrence of Christian theology." In this, he was "at one

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

with Blake, the only poet or thinker then alive with whom he had so much in common." We are assured that Shelley's "blow aimed at the creed would imply nothing of insult or outrage to the person."

Shelley appeared as the child of a weird and piercing melody. Thomas Lake Harris says of him: "The boy dreamer and lover; the youthful sage and philanthropist; by native gifts and qualities of life the deep explorer of woman and hence of man; the half-born adept; the minstrel of a strain of vivid pathos, tenderness, and intensity of aspiration; of deepest human pity and longing for the welfare of all that live; of scorn, hatred and detestation of all things ignoble, enslaving and corrupting—this was Shelley. He was a Christian in essence, though by the outward mind he knew not Christ—Christa: had he known, he would have gone up fearlessly, gently, humbly, to nestle in the Mother's bosom and to lay his head upon the Father's knee. . . . The child grew up among the wolfish instincts of a dominant egoistic caste and race, which had inverted its own supreme cult, transposing it in form and feature from the sense of its original altruism—a race that, for its kings, had an imbecile about to be followed by a debauchee, and that had, instituted into its proud sanctuaries of religion, a godless mammon service. There the titled great held the people by the throat: the peasants in the fields and the operatives of the towns lived, age by age, upon the verge of famine, in a land that overflowed with plenty.

"These were Shelley's surroundings: the misapprehension of his thought, the mistakes of his brief career, are not to be compared with the energizing perfections which that career implied, nor with the trains of noble sentiments and purposes which that thought has assisted to generate.

'Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
He hath awakened from the dream of life!'



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*A Dirge*

**R**OUGH wind, that moanest loud  
Grief too sad for song;  
Wild wind, when sullen cloud  
Knells all the night long;  
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,  
Bare woods, whose branches strain,  
Deep caves and dreary main,  
Wail, for the world's wrong!

*Music When Soft Voices Die*

**M**USIC, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory;  
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

*Hymn of Pan*

**F**ROM the forests and highlands  
We come, we come;  
From the river-girth islands  
Where loud waves are dumb,  
Listening to my sweet pipings.  
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,  
The bees on the bells of thyme,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The birds on the myrtle bushes,  
The cicale above in the lime,  
And the lizards below in the grass,  
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,  
Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,  
And all dark Tempe lay  
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing  
The light of the dying day,  
Speded by my sweet pipings.  
The Sileni and Sylvans and Fauns,  
And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,  
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,  
And the brink of the dewy caves,  
And all that did then attend and follow,  
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,  
With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,  
I sang of the dædal earth,  
And of heaven, and the giant wars,  
And love, and death, and birth.  
And then I changed my pipings—  
Singing how down the vale of Mænalus  
I pursued a maiden, and clasped a reed:  
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus:  
It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed.  
All wept—as I think both ye now would,  
If envy or age had not frozen your blood—  
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Hellas*

THE world's great age begins anew,  
The golden years return,  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn:  
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam  
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far;  
A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
Against the morning star;  
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
Fraught with a later prize;  
Another Orpheus sings again,  
And loves, and weeps, and dies;  
A new Ulysses leaves once more  
Calypso for his native shore.

O write no more the tale of Troy,  
If earth Death's scroll must be—  
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy  
Which dawns upon the free,  
Although a subtler Sphinx renew  
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,  
And to remoter time  
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
The splendor of its prime;

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

And leave, if naught so bright may live,  
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose  
Shall burst, more bright and good  
Than all who fell, than One who rose,  
Than many unsubdued:  
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
But votive tears and symbol flowers.<sup>1</sup>

O cease! must hate and death return?  
Cease! must men kill and die?  
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn  
Of bitter prophecy!  
The world is weary of the past—  
O might it die or rest at last!

<sup>1</sup> "Saturn and Love" were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. "All" those "who fell," or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the "One who rose," or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and "the many unsubdued," or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and (until the revival of learning and the arts) perpetually increasing activity. (*From Shelley's Note.*)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*To a Skylark*

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!  
Bird thou never wert—  
That from heaven or near it  
Pourest thy full heart  
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.  
  
Higher still and higher  
From the earth thou springest,  
Like a cloud of fire;  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightening  
Of the sunken sun,  
O'er which clouds are brightening,  
Thou dost float and run,  
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even  
Melts around thy flight;  
Like a star of heaven,  
In the broad daylight  
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight—

Keen as are the arrows  
Of that silver sphere  
Whose intense lamp narrows  
In the white dawn clear,  
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air  
With thy voice is loud,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

As, when night is bare,  
From one lonely cloud  
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is over-  
flowed.

What thou art we know not;  
What is most like thee?  
From rainbow clouds there flow not  
Drops so bright to see,  
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody:

Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden,  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden  
In a palace tower,  
Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden  
In a dell of dew,  
Scattering unbeholden  
Its aërial hue  
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the  
view:

Like a rose embowered  
In its own green leaves,  
By warm winds deflowered,  
Till the scent it gives  
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd  
thieves:

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Sound of vernal showers  
On the twinkling grass,  
Rain-awakened flowers—  
All that ever was  
Joyous and clear and fresh—thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,  
What sweet thoughts are thine:  
I have never heard  
Praise of love or wine  
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,  
Or triumphal chant,  
Matched with thine would be all  
But an empty vaunt—  
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains  
Of thy happy strain?  
What fields, or waves, or mountains?  
What shapes of sky or plain?  
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance  
Languor cannot be:  
Shadow of annoyance  
Never came near thee:  
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,  
Thou of death must deem  
Things more true and deep  
Than we mortals dream,  
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet, if we could scorn  
Hate and pride and fear,  
If we were things born  
Not to shed a tear,  
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know;  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

*A Lament*

O WORLD! O life! O time!  
On whose last steps I climb  
Trembling at that where I had stood before;  
When will return the glory of your prime?  
No more—Oh, never more!



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Out of the day and night  
A joy has taken flight;  
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,  
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight  
No more—Oh, never more!

*Ode to the West Wind*

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's  
being,

Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odors plain and hill;

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;  
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,

Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning! there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,  
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: O hear!

III<sup>1</sup>

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

<sup>1</sup>The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of this third part is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it. (*Shelley's note.*)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;  
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O uncontrollable! if even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed  
Scarce seemed a vision—I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
O! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own?  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,  
Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth;  
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

*Indian Serenade*

I ARISE from dreams of thee  
In the first sweet sleep of night,  
When the winds are breathing low,  
And the stars are shining bright.  
I arise from dreams of thee,  
And a spirit in my feet  
Hath led me—who knows how?  
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The wandering airs they faint  
On the dark, the silent stream—  
And the champak's odors fail  
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;  
The nightingale's complaint,  
It dies upon her heart,  
As I must die on thine,  
O belovèd as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!  
I die! I faint! I fail!  
Let thy love in kisses rain  
On my lips and eyelids pale.  
My cheek is cold and white, alas!  
My heart beats loud and fast:  
O press it close to thine again,  
Where it must break at last!

*Night*

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,  
Spirit of Night!  
Out of the misty eastern cave,  
Where, all the long and lone daylight,  
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear  
Which make thee terrible and dear—  
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,  
Star-inwrought!  
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;  
Kiss her until she be wearied out.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Then wander o'er city and sea and land,  
Touching all with thine opiate wand—  
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,  
I sighed for thee;  
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,  
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,  
And the weary Day turned to her rest,  
Lingering like an unloved guest,  
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,  
"Wouldst thou me?"  
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,  
Murmured like a noontide bee,  
"Shall I nestle near thy side?"  
Wouldst thou me?" And I replied,  
"No, not thee!"

Death will come when thou art dead,  
Soon, too soon—  
Sleep will come when thou art fled.  
Of neither would I ask the boon  
I ask of thee, belovèd Night—  
Swift be thine approaching flight,  
Come soon, soon!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Lines*

WHEN the lamp is shattered,  
The light in the dust lies dead;  
When the cloud is scattered,  
The rainbow's glory is shed;  
When the lute is broken,  
Sweet tones are remembered not;  
When the lips have spoken,  
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendor  
Survive not the lamp and the lute,  
The heart's echoes render  
No song when the spirit is mute—  
No song but sad dirges,  
Like the wind through a ruined cell,  
Or the mournful surges  
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,  
Love first leaves the well-built nest;  
The weak one is singled  
To endure what it once possest.  
O Love, who bewailest  
The frailty of all things here,  
Why choose you the frailest  
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee,  
As the storms rock the ravens on high:  
Bright reason will mock thee,  
Like the sun from a wintry sky.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

From thy nest every rafter  
Will rot, and thine eagle home  
Leave thee naked to laughter,  
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

*To —*

ONE word is too often profaned  
For me to profane it;  
One feeling too falsely disdained  
For thee to disdain it;  
One hope is too like despair  
For prudence to smother;  
And pity from thee more dear  
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love:  
But wilt thou accept not  
The worship the heart lifts above  
And the heavens reject not,  
The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow?



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Ozymandias of Egypt*

**I** MET a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown  
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

*From "Lines Written among the Euganean  
Hills"*

**M**ANY a green isle needs must be  
In the deep wide sea of misery;  
Or the mariner, worn and wan,  
Never thus could voyage on  
Day and night, and night and day,  
Drifting on his dreary way,  
With the solid darkness black  
Closing round his vessel's track;  
Whilst above, the sunless sky,  
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,  
And behind the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with lightning feet,  
Riving sail and cord and plank

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Till the ship has almost drank  
Death from the o'erbrimming deep;  
And sinks down, down, like that sleep  
When the dreamer seems to be  
Weltering through eternity;  
And the dim low line before  
Of a dark and distant shore  
Still recedes, as, ever still  
Longing with divided will,  
But no power to seek or shun,  
He is ever drifted on  
O'er the unreposing wave  
To the haven of the grave.

Ay, many flowering islands lie  
In the waters of wide agony:  
To such a one this morn was led  
My bark, by soft winds piloted.  
'Mid the mountains Euganean  
I stood listening to the pæan  
With which the legioned rooks did hail  
The sun's uprise majestic:  
Gathering round with wings all hoar,  
Through the dewy mist they soar  
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven  
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,  
Flecked with fire and azure, lie  
In the unfathomable sky,  
So their plumes of purple grain,  
Starred with drops of golden rain,  
Gleam above the sunlight woods,  
As in silent multitudes  
On the morning's fitful gale  
Through the broken mist they sail;  
And the vapors cloven and gleaming

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Follow down the dark steep streaming,  
Till all is bright and clear and still  
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea  
The waveless plain of Lombardy,  
Bounded by the vaporous air,  
Islanded by cities fair;  
Underneath day's azure eyes,  
Ocean's nursling, Venice, lies—  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrite's destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves.  
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,  
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined  
On the level quivering line  
Of the waters crystalline;  
And before that chasm of light,  
As within a furnace bright,  
Column, tower and dome and spire  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Pointing with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies;  
As the flames of sacrifice  
From the marble shrines did rise,  
As to pierce the dome of gold  
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt city! thou hast been  
Ocean's child, and then his queen;  
Now is come a darker day,  
And thou soon must be his prey,  
If the power that raised thee here

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Hallow so thy watery bier.  
A less drear ruin then than now,  
With thy conquest-branded brow  
Stooping to the slave of slaves  
From thy throne among the waves  
Wilt thou be when the sea-mew  
Flies, as once before it flew,  
O'er thine isles depopulate,  
And all is in its ancient state,  
Save where many a palace-gate  
With green sea-flowers overgrown  
Like a rock of ocean's own,  
Topples o'er the abandoned sea  
As the tides change sullenly.  
The fisher on his watery way  
Wandering at the close of day  
Will spread his sail and seize his oar  
Till he pass the gloomy shore,  
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep  
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,  
Lead a rapid mask of death  
O'er the waters of his path.

Noon descends around me now:  
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,  
When a soft and purple mist,  
Like a vaporous amethyst,  
Or an air-dissolvèd star,  
Mingling light and fragrance, far  
From the curved horizon's bound  
To the point of heaven's profound,  
Fills the overflowing sky;  
And the plains that silent lie  
Underneath; the leaves unsodden  
Where the infant frost has trodden

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

With his morning-wingèd feet,  
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;  
And the red and golden vines,  
Piercing with their trellised lines  
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;  
The dun and bladed grass no less,  
Pointing from this hoary tower  
In the windless air; the flower  
Glimmering at my feet; the line  
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine  
In the south dimly islanded;  
And the Alps, whose snows are spread  
High between the clouds and sun;  
And of living things each one;  
And my spirit, which so long  
Darkened this swift stream of song,  
Interpenetrated lie  
By the glory of the sky:  
Be it love, light, harmony,  
Odor, or the soul of all  
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,  
Or the mind which feeds this verse  
Peopling the lone universe.  
Noon descends, and after noon  
Autumn's evening meets me soon,  
Leading the infantine moon,  
And that one star, which to her  
Almost seems to minister  
Half the crimson light she brings  
From the sunset's radiant springs:  
And the soft dreams of the morn  
(Which like wingèd winds had borne  
To that silent isle, which lies  
Mid remembered agonies,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The frail bark of this lone being)  
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,  
And its ancient pilot, Pain,  
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be  
In the sea of life and agony;  
Other spirits float and flee  
O'er that gulf; even now, perhaps,  
On some rock the wild wave wraps,  
With folded winds they waiting sit  
For my bark, to pilot it  
To some calm and blooming cove,  
Where for me, and those I love,  
May a windless bower be built,  
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,  
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,  
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,  
And soft sunshine, and the sound  
Of old forests echoing round,  
And the light and smell divine  
Of all flowers that breathe and shine:  
—We may live so happy there,  
That the spirits of the air,  
Envyng us, may even entice  
To our healing paradise  
The polluting multitude;  
But their rage would be subdued  
By that clime divine and calm,  
And the winds whose wings rain balm  
On the uplifted soul, and leaves  
Under which the bright sea heaves;  
While each breathless interval  
In their whisperings musical  
The inspirèd soul supplies

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

With its own deep melodies;  
And the love which heals all strife,  
Circling, like the breath of life,  
All things in that sweet abode  
With its own mild brotherhood:  
They, not it, would change; and soon  
Every sprite beneath the moon  
Would repent its envy vain,  
And the earth grow young again!

*Mutability*

THE flower that smiles to-day  
To-morrow dies;  
All that we wish to stay  
Tempt and then flies.  
What is this world's delight?  
Lightning that mocks the night,  
Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is!  
Friendship how rare!  
Love, how it sells poor bliss  
For proud despair!  
But we, though soon they fall,  
Survive their joy, and all  
Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,  
Whilst flowers are gay,  
Whilst eyes that change ere night  
Make glad the day;  
Whilst yet the calm hours creep  
Dream thou—and from thy sleep  
Then wake to weep.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*The Cloud*

I

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
From the seas and the streams;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noonday dreams.  
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet birds every one,  
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
As she dances about the sun.  
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
And whiten the green plains under;  
And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

II

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And their great pines groan aghast;  
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers  
Lightning, my pilot, sits;  
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
It struggles and howls by fits;  
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
This pilot is guiding me,  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea;  
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
Over the lakes and the plains,  
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
The spirit he loves remains;



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,  
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

III

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack  
When the morning star shines dead;  
As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
An eagle alit one moment may sit  
In the light of its golden wings.  
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,  
Its ardors of rest and of love,  
And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
From the depth of heaven above,  
With wings folded I rest on my airy nest,  
As still as a brooding dove.

IV

That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden,  
Whom mortals call the moon,  
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
By the midnight breezes strewn;  
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
Which only the angels hear,  
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
The stars peep behind her and peer;  
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
Like a swarm of golden bees,  
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
Till the calm river, lakes and seas,  
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
Are each paved with the moon and these.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

V

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,  
    And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;  
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,  
    When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
    Over a torrent sea,  
Sunbeam proof, I hang like a roof,  
    The mountains its columns be.  
The triumphal arch through which I march,  
    With hurricane, fire and snow,  
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,  
    Is the million-colored bow;  
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,  
    While the moist earth was laughing below.

VI

I am the daughter of the earth and water,  
    And the nursling of the sky;  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;  
    I change, but I cannot die.  
For after the rain, when, with never a stain,  
    The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,  
    Build up the blue dome of air,  
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
    And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
    I arise and unbuild it again.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*From "Epipsychidion: Verses addressed to the  
noble and unfortunate Lady Emilia  
Viviani, now imprisoned in the Convent  
of St. Anne, Pisa"*

SPOUSE! sister! angel! pilot of the fate  
Whose course has been so starless! O too late  
Belovèd, O too soon adored, by me!  
For in the fields of immortality  
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
A divine presence in a place divine;  
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,  
A shadow of that substance, from its birth:  
But not as now. I love thee; yes, I feel  
That on the fountain of my heart a seal  
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright  
For thee, since in those tears thou hast delight.  
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,  
For one another, though dissimilar?  
Such difference without discord as can make  
Those sweetest sounds in which all spirits shake,  
As trembling leaves in a continuous air.

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare  
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.  
I never was attached to that great sect  
Whose doctrine is that each one should select  
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion; though it is in the code  
Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread  
Who travel to their home among the dead

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

By the broad highway of the world, and so  
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True love in this differs from gold and clay,  
That to divide is not to take away.  
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,  
Imagination, which from earth and sky,  
And from the depths of human fantasy,  
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills  
The universe with glorious beams, and kills  
Error the worm with many a sunlike arrow  
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow  
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,  
The life that wears, the spirit that creates,  
One object and one form, and builds thereby  
A sepulchre for its eternity!

Mind from its object differs most in this:  
Evil from good; misery from happiness;  
The baser from the nobler; the impure  
And frail from what is clear and must endure.  
If you divide suffering and dross, you may  
Diminish till it is consumed away;  
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,  
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not  
How much, while any yet remains unshared,  
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared.  
This truth is that deep well whence sages draw  
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law  
By which those live to whom this world of life  
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Tills for the promise of a later birth  
The wilderness of this elysian earth.

\* \* \* \* \*

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me!  
To whatsoe'er of dull mortality  
Is mine remain a vestal sister still;  
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable—  
Not mine, but me—henceforth be thou united,  
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.  
The hour is come: the destined star has risen  
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.  
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set  
The sentinels—but true Love never yet  
Was thus constrained. It overleaps all fence:  
Like lightning, with invisible violence  
Piercing its continents; like heaven's free breath,  
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,  
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way  
Through temple, tower and palace, and the array  
Of arms. More strength has Love than he or they;  
For it can burst his charnel, and make free  
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,  
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbor now;  
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;  
There is a path on the sea's azure floor,—  
No keel has ever ploughed that path before;  
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;  
The treacherous ocean has forsworn its wiles;  
The merry mariners are bold and free:  
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Our bark is as an albatross whose nest  
Is a far Eden of the purple east;  
And we between her wings will sit, while Night  
And Day and Storm and Calm pursue their flight,  
Our ministers, along the boundless sea,  
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.  
It is an isle under Ionian skies,  
Beautiful as a wreck of paradise;  
And, for the harbors are not safe and good,  
This land would have remained a solitude  
But for some pastoral people native there,  
Who from the elysian, clear, and golden air  
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold—  
Simple and spirited, innocent and bold.  
The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,  
With ever-changing sound and light and foam  
Kissing the sifted sands and caverns hoar;  
And all the winds wandering along the shore  
Undulate with the undulating tide.  
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide;  
And many a fountain, rivulet and pond,  
As clear as elemental diamond,  
Or serene morning air. And far beyond,  
The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer  
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year)  
Pierce into glades, caverns and bowers and halls  
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls  
Illumining, with sound that never fails,  
Accompany the noonday nightingales.  
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs.  
The light clear element which the isle wears  
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,  
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,  
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;  
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

And dart their arrowy odor through the brain,  
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.  
And every motion, odor, beam, and tone,  
With that deep music is in unison;  
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem  
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.  
It is an isle 'twixt heaven, air, earth and sea,  
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;  
Bright as that wandering Eden, Lucifer,  
Washed by the soft blue oceans of young air.  
It is a favored place. Famine or blight,  
Pestilence, war and earthquake, never light  
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they  
Sail onward far upon their fatal way.  
The wingèd storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm  
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm  
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,  
From which its fields and woods ever renew  
Their green and golden immortality.  
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky  
There fall clear exhalations, soft and bright,  
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight:  
Which sun or moon or zephyr draw aside,  
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride  
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,  
Blushes and trembles at its own excess.  
Yet, like a buried lamp, a soul no less  
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,  
An atom of the Eternal, whose own smile  
Unfolds itself, and may be felt not seen  
O'er the grey rocks, blue waves and forests green,  
Filling their bare and void interstices.

\* \* \* \* \*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed  
Thee to be lady of the solitude.  
And I have fitted up some chambers there  
Looking towards the golden eastern air,  
And level with the living winds which flow  
Like waves above the living waves below.  
I have sent books and music there, and all  
Those instruments with which high spirits call  
The future from its cradle, and the past  
Out of its grave, and make the present last  
In thoughts and joys which sleep but cannot die,  
Folded within their own eternity.  
Our simple life wants little, and true taste  
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to waste  
The scene it would adorn; and therefore still  
Nature with all her children haunts the hill.  
The ringdove in the embowering ivy yet  
Keeps up her love-lament; and the owls flit  
Round the evening tower; and the young stars glance  
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;  
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight  
Before our gate; and the slow silent night  
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.  
Be this our home in life; and, when years heap  
Their withered hours like leaves on our decay,  
Let us become the overhanging day,  
The living soul, of this elysian isle—  
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile  
We two will rise and sit and walk together  
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather;  
And wander in the meadows; or ascend  
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend  
With lightest winds to touch their paramour;  
Or linger where the pebble-paven shore  
Under the quick faint kisses of the sea



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy—  
Possessing and possessed by all that is  
Within that calm circumference of bliss,  
And by each other, till to love and live  
Be one—or at the noontide hour arrive  
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep  
The moonlight of the expired Night asleep,  
Through which the awakened Day can never peep;  
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,  
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights—  
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain  
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.  
And we will talk, until thought's melody  
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die  
In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,  
Harmonising silence without a sound.  
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,  
And our veins beat together; and our lips,  
With other eloquence than words, eclipse  
The soul that burns between them; and the wells  
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,  
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be  
Confused in passion's golden purity,  
As mountain-springs under the morning sun.  
We shall become the same, we shall be one  
Spirit within two frames, oh wherefore two?  
One passion in twin hearts, which grows and grew  
Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,  
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,  
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still  
Burning, yet ever unconsumable;  
In one another's substance finding food,  
Light flames too pure and light and unimbued  
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Which point to heaven and cannot pass away:  
One hope within two wills, one will beneath  
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,  
One heaven, one hell, one immortality,  
And one annihilation!

Woe is me!

The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce  
Into the height of Love's rare universe  
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire—  
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

*From "Adonais; an Elegy on the Death of  
John Keats"*

*This stands with the greatest elegies of the world. It pays homage to John Keats, who died in Rome in 1821. Shelley was aware of the imperfections of the youthful "Endymion," but placed the "Hyperion" at the summit of Keats's achievement. Shelley was stirred by the opinion (now discredited) that Keats's untimely death was caused by a brutal criticism of "Endymion" in "The Quarterly Review."*

*"Adonais" breathes no individual sorrow, but it speaks a wild regret for this pathetic death, it utters a passionate indignation against the insolence of murderous critics. The mourners for "Adonais" are not so much persons as they are insubstantial personifications—Poetry, Dreams, Persuasions, Splendors, Glooms, Glimmering Incarnations. The lament is for Keats the poet, not for Keats the man. Some of the noblest stanzas are in the closing speculative parts. Shelley believed that back of Nature and Human Nature there is an Anima Mundi, the absolute energy, the sustaining power, which is the source of all beauty and all love. This power reveals itself through Nature and Man*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*as far as the resistant outer media will permit. Man in his earthly life is not really alive, being partly separated from this power. When a man dies, if he has an affiliation with this divine power, then that power will draw him into its beautiful mystery.*

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!  
O weep for Adonais, though our tears  
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
And thou, sad Hour selected from all years  
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
And teach them thine own sorrow! Say: “With me  
Died Adonais! Till the future dares  
Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be  
An echo and a light unto eternity.”

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,  
When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
In darkness? Where was lorn Urania  
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,  
Mid listening Echoes, in her paradise  
She sate, while one, with soft enamored breath,  
Rekindled all the fading melodies  
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,  
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

Oh weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!—  
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed  
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,  
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;  
For he is gone where all things wise and fair  
Descend Oh dream not that the amorous deep  
Will yet restore him to the vital air;  
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Most musical of mourners, weep again!  
Lament anew, Urania!—He died  
Who was the sire of an immortal strain,  
Blind, old and lonely, when his country's pride  
The priest, the slave and the liberticide,  
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite  
Of lust and blood. He went untrified  
Into the gulf of death; but his clear sprite  
Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the Sons of  
Light.

Oh weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,  
The passion-wingèd ministers of thought,  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams  
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
The love which was its music, wander not—  
Wander no more from kindling brain to brain,  
But droop there whence they sprung; and mourn  
their lot  
Round the cold heart where, after their sweet pain,  
They never will gather strength or find a home again.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep  
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife  
Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay  
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief  
Convulse us and consume us day by day,  
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living  
clay.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;  
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again;  
From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
He is secure, and now can never mourn  
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;  
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. . . .

He is made one with Nature: there is heard  
His voice in all her music, from the moan  
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;  
He is a presence to be felt and known  
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;  
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,  
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness  
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear  
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling  
there,  
All new successions to the forms they wear;  
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight  
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear,  
And bursting in its beauty and its might  
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

The splendors of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
And love and life contend in it, for what  
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there  
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,  
Far in the Unapparent: Chatterton  
Rose pale—his solemn agony had not  
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought  
And as he fell and as he lived and loved,  
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved;  
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved. . . .

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet  
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned  
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,  
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find  
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change and pass;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
Until Death tramples it to fragments. Die,  
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!  
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?  
Thy hopes are gone before; from all things here  
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!  
A light is passed from the revolving year,  
And man and woman; and what still is dear  
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
The soft sky smiles—the low wind whispers near;  
'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,  
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me: my spirit's bark is driven  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;  
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;  
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

### *Peaks of Life*

FROM "PROMETHEUS UNBOUND"

*Shelley believed that in the destiny of mankind evil is not inherent but is an accident that may be expelled. In other words, Shelley believed that mankind has only to will that there shall be no evil, and—behold—there will be none. Evidently he looked on evil as an interloper—not as a necessity of existence. Life may be all-good, but in different degrees of goodness—the greater good, the evolving lesser good. In this he stood on the philosophic ground taken by Jesus in "The Gospels."*

TO suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

### *Voice in the Air*

FROM "PROMETHEUS UNBOUND"

LIFE of Life! thy lips enkindle  
With their love the breath between them;  
And thy smiles before they dwindle  
Make the cold air fire; then screen them  
In those looks, where whoso gazes  
Faints, entangled in their mazes.



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning  
Through the vest which seems to hide them;  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Through the clouds ere they divide them;  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,  
But thy voice sounds low and tender  
Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
From the sight, that liquid splendor,  
And all feel, yet see thee never,  
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest  
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
And the souls of whom thou lovest  
Walk upon the winds with lightness,  
Till they fail, as I am failing,  
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

*Asia*

My soul is an enchanted boat,  
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;  
And thine doth like an angel sit  
Beside a helm conducting it,  
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
It seems to float ever, for ever,  
Upon that many-winding river,  
Between mountains, woods, abysses,  
A paradise of wildernesses!  
Till, like one in slumber bound,  
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*From "Alastor"*  
or  
*The Spirit of Solitude*  
[Shelley's Preface]

*The poem entitled "Alastor" may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.*

*The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof, from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

"The good die first,  
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,  
Burn to the socket!"

December 14, 1815.

*Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, querebam quid  
amarem amans amare  
Confessions of St. Augustine.*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

**E**ARTH, Ocean, Air, belovèd brotherhood!  
If our great mother has imbued my soul  
With aught of natural piety to feel  
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;  
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,  
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,  
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;  
If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,  
And Winter robing with pure snow and crowns  
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs—  
If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes  
Her first sweet kisses—have been dear to me;  
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast,  
I consciously have injured, but still loved  
And cherished these my kindred—then forgive  
This boast, belovèd brethren, and withdraw  
No portion of your wonted favor now!

Mother of this unfathomable world,  
Favor my solemn song! for I have loved  
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched  
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,  
And my heart ever gazes on the depth  
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed  
In charnels and on coffins, where black Death  
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee;  
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
Of thee and thine by forcing some lone ghost,  
Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,  
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,  
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist  
Staking his very life on some dark hope,  
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

With my most innocent love; until strange tears,  
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made  
Such magic as compels the charmed night  
To render up thy charge. And, though ne'er yet  
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,  
Enough from incommunicable dream,  
And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday thought,  
Has shone within me, that serenely now  
And moveless (as a long-forgotten lyre  
Suspended in the solitary dome  
Of some mysterious and deserted fane)  
I wait thy breath, Great Parent; that my strain  
May modulate with murmurs of the air,  
And the motions of the forests and the sea,  
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns  
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb  
No human hand with pious reverence reared,  
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds  
Built o'er his moldering bones a pyramid  
Of moldering leaves in the waste wilderness.  
A lovely youth, no mourning maiden decked  
With weeping flowers or votive cypress-wreath  
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:  
Gentle and brave and generous, no lorn bard  
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:  
He lived, he died, he sang, in solitude.  
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes;  
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined  
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.  
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,  
And Silence, too enamored of that voice,  
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

By solemn vision and bright silver dream  
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight  
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air  
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.  
The fountains of divine philosophy  
Fled not his thirsting lips: and all of great  
Or good or lovely which the sacred past  
In truth or fable consecrates he felt  
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left  
His cold fireside and alienated home,  
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.  
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness  
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought  
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,  
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps  
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er  
The red volcano overcanopies  
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice  
With burning smoke; or where bitumen-lakes  
On black bare pointed islets ever beat  
With sluggish surge; or where the secret caves  
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs  
Of fire and poison, inaccessible  
To avarice or pride, their starry domes  
Of diamond and of gold expand above  
Numberless and immeasurable halls,  
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines  
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.  
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty  
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven  
And the green earth, lost in his heart its claims  
To love and wonder. He would linger long  
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home;  
Until the doves and squirrels would partake  
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,  
And the wild antelope, that starts when'er  
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend  
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form  
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,  
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
The awful ruins of the days of old:  
Athens and Tyre and Balbec, and the waste  
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers  
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,  
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,  
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,  
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphinx,  
Dark Ethiopia in her desert hills  
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,  
Stupendous columns, and wild images  
Of more than man, where marble dæmons watch  
The zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,  
He lingered, poring on memorials  
Of the world's youth; through the long burning day  
Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor, when the moon  
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,  
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed  
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw  
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,  
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,  
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole  
From duties and repose to tend his steps:  
Enamored, yet not daring for deep awe

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

To speak her love—and watched his nightly sleep,  
Sleepless herself to gaze upon his lips  
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath  
Of innocent dreams arose. Then, when red morn  
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home,  
Wildered and wan and panting, she returned.

The poet, wandering on, through Arabia  
And Persia and the wild Carmanian waste,  
And o'er the ærial mountains which pour down  
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,  
In joy and exultation held his way;  
Till in the vale of Cashmere, far within  
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine  
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,  
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched  
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep  
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet  
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid  
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.  
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,  
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held  
His inmost sense suspended in its web  
Of many-colored woof and shifting hues.  
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,  
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,  
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood  
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame  
A permeating fire. Wild numbers then  
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs  
Subdued by its own pathos: her fair hands  
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Strange symphony, and in their branching veins  
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.  
The beating of her heart was heard to fill  
The pauses of her music, and her breath  
Tumultuously accorded with those fits  
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,  
As if her heart impatiently endured  
Its bursting burden. At the sound he turned,  
And saw, by the warm light of their own life,  
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
Of woven wind; her outspread arms now bare,  
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,  
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
Outstretched and pale, and quivering eagerly.  
His strong heart sank and sickened with excess  
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs, and quelled  
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet  
Her panting bosom—she drew back awhile;  
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,  
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry  
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.  
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night  
Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,  
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,  
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance.  
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon  
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,  
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,  
Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled  
The hues of heaven that canopied his bower  
Of yesternight? the sounds that soothed his sleep,  
The mystery and the majesty of earth,  
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly  
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.  
The Spirit of sweet Human Love has sent  
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues  
Beyond the realms of dreams that fleeting shade;  
He overleaps the bounds. Alas! alas!  
Were limbs and breath and being intertwined  
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost  
In the wide pathless desert of dim Sleep,  
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of Death  
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,  
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,  
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,  
Lead only to a black and watery depth;  
While Death's blue vault with loathliest vapors hung,  
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales  
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,  
Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?  
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart:  
The insatiate hope which it awakened stung  
His brain even like despair.

While daylight held  
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference  
With his still soul. At night the passion came,  
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,  
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth  
Into the darkness. As an eagle, grasped  
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast  
Burn with the poison, and precipitates,  
Through night and day, tempest and calm and cloud,  
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight  
O'er the wide æry wilderness; thus, driven  
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,  
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,  
Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,  
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,  
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues  
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on,  
Till vast Aornos, seen from Petra's steep,  
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;  
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs  
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,  
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,  
Bearing within his life the brooding care  
That ever fed on its decaying flame.  
And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair,  
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,  
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand  
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;  
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone,  
As in a furnace burning secretly,  
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,  
Who ministered with human charity  
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe  
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,  
Encountering on some dizzy precipice  
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of Wind,  
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet  
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused  
In his career. The infant would conceal  
His troubled visage in his mother's robe  
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,  
To remember their strange light in many a dream  
Of after times. But youthful maidens, taught  
By Nature, would interpret half the woe  
That wasted him, would call him with false names,  
Brother and friend, would press his pallid hand

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path  
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore  
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste  
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged  
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,  
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.  
It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings  
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course  
High over the immeasurable main.  
His eyes pursued its flight: "Thou hast a home,  
Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine home,  
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck  
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes  
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.  
And what am I that I should linger here,  
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,  
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven  
That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile  
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.  
For Sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly  
Its precious charge; and silent Death exposed,  
Faithless perhaps as Sleep, a shadowy lure,  
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts, he looked around:  
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight  
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.  
A little shallop floating near the shore  
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.  
It had been long abandoned, for its sides  
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Swayed with the undulations of the tide.  
A restless impulse urged him to embark.  
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;  
For well he knew that mighty shadow loves  
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny: sea and sky  
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind  
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.  
Following his eager soul, the wanderer  
Leapt in the boat; he spread his cloak aloft  
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,  
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea  
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats  
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds  
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly  
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled  
The straining boat. A whirlwind swept it on,  
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,  
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.  
The waves arose. Higher and higher still  
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge,  
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.  
Calm, and rejoicing in the fearful war  
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast  
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven  
With dark obliterating course, he sate:  
As if their genii were the ministers  
Appointed to conduct him to the light  
Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate  
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on;  
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues  
High mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;  
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,  
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks  
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of Day;  
Night followed clad with stars. On every side  
More horribly the multitudinous streams  
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war  
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock  
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat  
Still fled before the storm, still fled, like foam  
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;  
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;  
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass,  
That fell, convulsing ocean—safely fled—  
As if that frail and wasted human form  
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight  
The moon arose: and lo! the ethereal cliffs  
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone  
Among the stars like sunlight, and around  
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves,  
Bursting and edying irresistibly,  
Rage and resound for ever. Who shall save?  
The boat fled on—the boiling torrent drove—  
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,  
The shattered mountain overhung the sea;  
And faster still, beyond all human speed,  
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,  
The little boat was driven. A cavern there  
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths  
Engulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on  
With unrelaxing speed. "Vision and Love!"  
The Poet cried aloud, "I have beheld  
The path of thy departure. Sleep and Death  
Shall not divide us long."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The boat pursued  
The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone  
At length upon that gloomy river's flow.  
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves  
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream  
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,  
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,  
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell  
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound  
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass  
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;  
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,  
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved  
With alternating dash the gnarlèd roots  
Of mighty trees that stretched their giant arms  
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,  
Reflecting yet distorting every cloud,  
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.  
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,  
With dizzy swiftness, round and round and round,  
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose;  
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,  
Where through an opening of the rocky bank  
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot  
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides  
Is left, the boat paused shuddering. Shall it sink  
Down the abyss? shall the reverting stress  
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?  
Now shall it fall? A wandering stream of wind,  
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail;  
And lo! with gentle motion, between banks  
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,  
Beneath a woven grove, it sails: and, hark!  
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar  
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Where the embowering trees recede, and leave  
A little space of green expanse, the cove  
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers  
For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes  
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave  
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,  
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,  
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay,  
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed  
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair;  
But on his heart its solitude returned,  
And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid  
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,  
Had yet performed its ministry: it hung  
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud  
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods  
Of night close over it.

The nooday sun  
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass  
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence  
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,  
Scooped in the dark base of their æry rocks,  
Mocking its moans respond and roar for ever.  
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves  
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as, led  
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,  
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt some bank,  
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark  
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,  
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,  
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids  
Of the tall cedar, overarching, frame  
Most solemn domes within; and far below,  
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
The ash and the acacia floating hang,



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents clothed  
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
Starred with ten-thousand blossoms, flow around  
The grey trunks; and, as gamesome infants' eyes,  
With gentle meanings and most innocent wiles,  
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love  
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,  
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves  
Make network of the dark-blue light of day  
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable  
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns  
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms  
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen  
Sends from its woods of musk-rose twined with jasmine  
A soul-dissolving odour, to invite  
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,  
Silence and Twilight here, twin sisters, keep  
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,  
Like vaporous shapes half-seen. Beyond, a well,  
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,  
Images all the woven boughs above,  
And each depending leaf, and every speck  
Of azure sky darting between their chasms;  
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves  
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star  
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,  
Or painted bird sleeping beneath the moon,  
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,  
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings  
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld  
Their own wan light through the reflected lines  
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Of that still fountain; as the human heart,  
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard  
The motion of the leaves; the grass that sprung  
Startled, and glanced and trembled, even to feel  
An unaccustomed presence; and the sound  
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs  
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed  
To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes  
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light  
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords  
Of grace or majesty or mystery;  
But—undulating woods, and silent well,  
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom  
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming—  
Held commune with him, as if he and it  
Were all that was. Only—when his regard  
Was raised by intense pensiveness—two eyes,  
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought  
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles  
To beckon him.

\* \* \* \* \*

When on the threshold of the green recess  
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death  
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,  
Did he resign his high and holy soul  
To images of the majestic past,  
That paused within his passive being now,  
Like winds that bear sweet music when they breathe  
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place  
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk  
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone  
Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,  
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Of that obscurest chasm—and thus he lay,  
Surrendering to their final impulses  
The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,  
The torturers, slept: no mortal pain or fear  
Marred his repose; the influxes of sense,  
And his own being unalloyed by pain,  
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed  
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there  
At peace, and faintly smiling. His last sight  
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line  
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,  
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed  
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills  
It rests; and still, as the divided frame  
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,  
That ever beat in mystic sympathy  
With Nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still.  
And, when two lessening points of light alone  
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp  
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir  
The stagnate night—till the minutest ray  
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.  
It paused—it fluttered. But, when heaven remained  
Utterly black, the murky shades involved  
An image silent, cold, and motionless,  
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.  
Even as a vapor fed with golden beams  
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—  
No sense, no motion, no divinity—  
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream  
Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream  
Of youth which night and time have quenched for ever—  
Still, dark and dry, and unremembered now.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Oh for Medea's wondrous alchemy,  
Which, wheresoe'er it fell, made the earth gleam  
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale  
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! Oh that God,  
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice  
Which but one living man has drained, who now,  
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,  
Lone as incarnate death! Oh that the dream  
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,  
Raking the cinders of a crucible  
For life and power even when his feeble hand  
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law  
Of this so lovely world!—But thou art fled,  
Like some frail exhalation which the dawn  
Robes in its golden beams—ah thou hast fled!  
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,  
The child of grace and genius! Heartless things  
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms  
And beasts and men live on, and mighty earth,  
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,  
In vesper low or joyous orison,  
Lifts still its solemn voice—but thou art fled—  
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes  
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee  
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!  
Now thou art not! Upon those pallid lips,  
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes  
That image sleep in death, upon that form  
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear  
Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues  
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,  
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone  
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Let not high **verse** mourning the memory  
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe,  
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery  
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,  
And all the shows o' the world, are frail and vain  
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.  
It is a woe "too deep for tears" when all  
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves  
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,  
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope—  
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude—the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspires with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts—give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near he here represented in such colors as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative; it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death. (*Mrs. Shelley's note.*)

The deeper meaning of *Alastor* is to be found, not in the thought of death nor in the poet's recent communings with nature, but in the motto from St. Augustine placed upon its title-page, and in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, composed about a year later. Enamored of ideal loveliness, the poet pursues his vision through the universe, vainly hoping to assuage the thirst which has been stimulated in his spirit, and vainly longing for some mortal realization of his love. *Alastor*, like *Epipsychidion*, reveals the mistake which Shelley made in thinking that the idea of beauty could become incarnate for him in any earthly form; while the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* recognizes the truth that such realization of the ideal is impossible. The very last letter written by Shelley sets the misconception in its proper light: "I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats though unseen amongst us—visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain  
shower,  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance;  
Like hues and harmonies of evening—  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread—  
Like memory of music fled—  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate  
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
Of human thought or form—where art thou gone?  
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?  
Ask why the sunlight not for ever  
Weaves rainbow: o'er yon mountain river,  
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,  
Why fear and dream and death and birth  
Cast on the daylight of this earth  
Such gloom—why man has such a scope  
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

what is, perhaps, eternal." But this Shelley discovered only with  
"the years that bring the philosophic mind," and when he was  
upon the very verge of his untimely death. (Symonds' *Life of Shelley*.)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever  
To sage or poet these responses given—  
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost and Heaven  
Remain the records of their vain endeavor,  
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to  
sever,  
From all we hear and all we see,  
Doubt, chance and mutability.  
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,  
Or music by the night wind sent,  
Through strings of some still instrument,  
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,  
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope and Self-esteem, like clouds depart  
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.  
Man were immortal and omnipotent,  
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,  
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.  
Thou messenger of sympathies,  
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—  
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,  
Like darkness to a dying flame!  
Depart not as thy shadow came,  
Depart not—lest the grave should be,  
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,  
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is  
fed;

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I was not heard—I saw them not—  
When musing deeply on the lot  
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing  
All vital things that wake to bring  
News of birds and blossoming—  
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;  
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned  
    bowers  
Of studious zeal or love's delight  
Outwatched with me the envious night—  
They know that never joy illumed my brow  
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free  
This world from its dark slavery,  
That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,  
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
When noon is past—there is a harmony  
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,  
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,  
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!  
Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
Of nature on my passive youth  
Descended, to my onward life supply  
Its calm—to one who worships thee,  
And every form containing thee,  
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind  
To fear himself, and love all human kind.



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Men of England*

**M**EN of England, wherefore plough  
For the lords who lay ye low?  
Wherefore weave with toil and care  
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,  
From the cradle to the grave,  
Those ungrateful drones who would  
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
Many a weapon, chain and scourge,  
That these stingless drones may spoil  
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?  
Or what is it ye buy so dear  
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;  
The wealth ye find, another keeps;  
The robes ye weave, another wears;  
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap;  
Find wealth—let no impostor heap;  
Weave robes—let not the idle wear;  
Forge arms—in your defence to bear.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Shrink to your cellars, holes and cells;  
In halls ye deck another dwells.  
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see  
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,  
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,  
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair  
England be your sepulchre.

*Slavery*

WHAT is Freedom? Ye can tell  
That which Slavery is too well,  
For its very name has grown  
To an echo of your own.  
'Tis to work and have such pay  
As just keeps life from day to day  
In your limbs as in a cell  
For the tyrants' use to dwell,  
So that ye for them are made  
Loom and plough and sword and spade,  
With or without your own will, bent  
To their defense and nourishment.  
'Tis to see your children weak  
With their mothers pine and peak  
When the winter winds are bleak—  
They are dying whilst I speak.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

'Tis to hunger for such diet  
As the rich man in his riot  
Casts to the fat dogs that lie  
Surfeiting beneath his eye.

\* \* \* \*

'Tis to be a slave in soul,  
And to hold no strong control  
Over your own wills, but be  
All that others make of ye;  
And, at length when ye complain  
With a murmur weak and vain,  
'Tis to see the tyrant's crew  
Ride over your wives and you—  
Blood is on the grass like dew!  
Then it is to feel revenge,  
Fiercely thirsting to exchange  
Blood for blood, and wrong for wrong;  
Do not thus when ye are strong!  
Birds find rest in narrow nest,  
When weary of their wingèd quest;  
Beasts find fare in woody lair  
When storms and snow are in the air;  
Horses, oxen, have a home  
When from daily toil they come;  
Household dogs, when the wind roars,  
Find a home within warm doors;  
Asses, swine, have litter spread,  
And with fitting food are fed;  
All things have a home but one:  
Thou, O Englishman, hast none!  
This is Slavery!—Savage men,  
Or wild beasts within a den,  
Would endure not as ye do;  
But such ills they never knew.

\* \* \* \*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Rise, like lions after slumber,  
In unvanquishable number!  
Shake your chains to earth, like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you!  
Ye are many, they are few.

## FELICIA HEMANS

ENGLAND, 1793-1835

MRS. HEMANS was the popular woman poet of her time, esteemed by both Scott and Wordsworth. Her poetry is mainly lyrical and descriptive. The first of the following selections is of interest, not so much as a poem, but more as a resounding declamation, celebrating one of the great moments of history.

### *Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers*

THE breaking waves dashed high  
On a stern and rock-bound coast,  
And the woods against a stormy sky  
Their giant branches tossed;  
And the heavy night hung dark  
The hills and waters o'er,  
When a band of exiles moored their bark  
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,  
They, the true-hearted, came;  
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,  
And the trumpet that sings of fame;  
Not as the flying come,  
In silence and in fear—  
They shook the depths of the desert's gloom  
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

## FELICIA HEMANS

Amidst the storm they sang,  
And the stars heard, and the sea;  
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthem of the free.  
The ocean eagle soared  
From his nest by the white wave's foam;  
And the rocking pines of the forest roared—  
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair,  
Amidst that pilgrim-band:  
Why had they come to wither there,  
Away from their childhood's land?  
There was woman's fearless eye,  
Lit by her deep love's truth;  
There was manhood's brow serenely high,  
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?  
Bright jewels of the mine?  
The wealth of seas? the spoils of war?  
They sought a faith's pure shrine!  
Ay, call it holy ground,  
The soil where first they trod:  
They have left unstained what there they found—  
Freedom to worship God!

### *Dirge*

CALM on the bosom of thy God,  
Fair spirit, rest thee now!  
Even while with ours thy footsteps trod,  
His seal was on thy brow.

## FELICIA HEMANS

Dust, to its narrow house beneath!  
Soul, to its place on high!  
They that have seen thy look in death  
No more may fear to die.

### *Casabianca*

*In the battle of the Nile, the "Orient" took fire, and her guns were abandoned, except by the Admiral's son, Casabianca. This boy, about thirteen years of age, remained at his post until the flames reached the powder, whereupon he perished in the explosion. He had been ordered to stand at a certain post, but he should have saved himself. He was obedient, but we should learn that there are occasional cases where we need to see a command in the light of our common sense.*

THE boy stood on the burning deck  
Whence all but he had fled;  
The flame that lit the battle's wreck  
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,  
As born to rule the storm—  
A creature of heroic blood,  
A proud, though childlike form.

The flames rolled on—he would not go  
Without his father's word;  
That father, faint in death below,  
His voice no longer heard.

## FELICIA HEMANS

He called aloud: "Say, father say,  
If yet my task is done!"  
He knew not that the chieftain lay  
Unconscious of his son.

"Speak, father!" once again he cried,  
"If I may yet be gone!"  
And but the booming shots replied,  
And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath,  
And in his waving hair,  
And looked from that lone post of death,  
In still yet brave despair:

And shouted but once more aloud,  
"My father! must I stay?"  
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,  
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendor wild,  
They caught the flag on high,  
And streamed above the gallant child,  
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder-sound—  
The boy—oh, where was he?  
Ask of the winds that far around  
With fragments strewed the sea!

With mast and helm, and pennon fair,  
That well had borne their part—  
But the noblest thing that perished there  
Was that young faithful heart.



HENRY FRANCIS LYTE

SCOTLAND, 1793-1847

*From "Abide with Me"*

**A**BIDE with me! Fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away:  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!

JOHN CLARE

ENGLAND, 1793-1864

**T**HIS poet was the son of a wandering pauper, fiddler, teacher and farm-laborer. John Clare wrote his earlier poems in the intervals of hard work in the fields, and his later poems appeared during lucid intervals in a madhouse, to which ill-health, overwork and strong drink had driven him.

He educated himself by reading the best poets. Using the old meters, he wrote of the things about him—the village, the fields, the folk, the flowers. His outlook is local, but keen, and lavish in detail.

JOHN CLARE

*The Thrush's Nest*

WITHIN a thick and spreading hawthorn bush  
That overhung a molehill, large and round,  
I heard from morn to morn, a merry thrush  
Sing hymns of rapture, while I drank the sound  
With joy—and oft an unintruding guest,  
I watched her secret toils from day to day  
How true she warped the moss to form her nest,  
And modelled it within with wood and clay.

And by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,  
There lay her shining eggs as bright as flowers,  
Ink-spotted over, shells of green and blue;  
And there I witnessed, in the summer hours,  
A brood of nature's minstrels chirp and fly,  
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

*The Primrose*

WELCOME, pale primrose! starting up between  
Dead matted leaves of ash and oak that strew  
The every lawn, the wood, and spinney through,  
Mid creeping moss and ivy's darker green;  
How much thy presence beautifies the ground!  
How sweet thy modest unaffected pride  
Glow on the sunny bank and wood's warm side!  
And where thy fairy flowers in groups are found,  
The school-boy roams enchantedly along,  
Plucking the fairest with a rude delight:  
While the meek shepherd stops his simple song,  
To gaze a moment on the pleasing sight;  
O'erjoyed to see the flowers that truly bring  
The welcome news of sweet returning spring.

## JOHN KEATS

ENGLAND, 1795-1821

JOHN RUSKIN, confessing admiration for the poetry of Keats, says: "I dare not read him, so discontented he makes me with my own work." And Sidney Colvin voices a quite prevalent opinion in saying that "by power, as well as by temperament and aim, Keats was the most Shakespearean spirit that has lived since Shakespeare." In no poetry is the personality of the writer more manifest than in that of Keats: in none does the ideal creation spring more evidently from introspection and self-consciousness. His character—his strengths and weaknesses—determined his method of composition, as his method of composition imposed a limitation on his genius. A certain morbidness of fancy—due in great part to physical causes—haunted him. By a kind of incessant love-longing, he was driven to shun the realities of life and to find an asylum in the regions of imagination.

By many appraisers of poetry, including Coventry Patmore, Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is considered as probably "the finest lyric in the English language." Richard Le Gallienne recently bestowed upon it this honor. In Swinburne's estimation, poetic supremacy belongs to the great *Ode to a Nightingale*. Others put the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* in the same lofty category. By the way, Byron thought the *Hyperion* to be of Æschylean sublimity. To me, Keats has to his credit no performance more magical than his *Eve of St. Agnes*.

Of his *Endymion*, published in 1818, the *Edinburgh Quarterly Review* made the famous critical statement which is said to have affected Keats fatally: "We have not been able to struggle beyond the first of the four books of which this Poetic Romance consists. We should

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extremely lament this want of energy, or whatever it may be, on our parts, were it not for one consolation—namely, that we are no better acquainted with the meaning of the book through which we have so painfully toiled, than we are with that of the three which we have not looked into. It is not that Mr. Keats (if that be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his senses would put his real name to such a rhapsody) it is not, we say, that the author has not powers of language, rays of fancy, and gleams of genius—he has all these; but he is unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry, which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language.” The effect of this violent attack upon the susceptible poet resulted, Shelley records, in a pulmonary rupture: a rapid consumption ensued; and the succeeding recognition of his rare genius was ineffectual to heal the wound the careless pen had inflicted. But we now know that Shelley was wrong in his surmise: Keats’s ailment was hereditary.

There never was a poet more radiant in genius, more rich in promise. It is good to know that the heart of the world has finally turned to him. “He has his star at last.” He is now with the deathless ones—

“Bards who died content on pleasant sward,  
Leaving great verse unto a little clan.”

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*Ode to a Nightingale*

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thy happiness,  
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South!  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stainèd mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs;  
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

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Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
Already with thee! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy  
ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy!  
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
To thy high requiem become a sod.

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Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
The same that oft-times hath  
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music—do I wake or sleep?

### *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

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Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou has not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,  
For ever panting and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,  
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
What little town by river or sea-shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?  
And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell  
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,



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With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

### *Ode to Psyche*

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,  
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung  
Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear:  
Surely I dreamed to-day, or did I see  
The wingèd Psyche with awakened eyes?  
I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,  
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
Saw two fair creatures, couchèd side by side  
In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof  
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran  
A brooklet, scarce espied:

'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,  
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,  
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;  
Their arms embracèd, and their pinions too;  
Their lips touched not, but had not bade adieu,  
As if disjoinèd by soft-handed slumber,  
And ready still past kisses to outnumber  
At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love:  
The wingèd boy I knew;  
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?  
His Psyche true!

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O latest-born and loveliest vision far  
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!  
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-regioned star,  
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;  
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,  
Nor altar heaped with flowers;  
Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan  
Upon the midnight hours;  
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
From chain-swung censer teeming;  
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,  
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,  
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;  
Yet even in these days so far retired  
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,  
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.  
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan  
Upon the midnight hours;  
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
From swingèd censer teeming:  
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat  
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane  
In some untrodden region of my mind,  
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant  
pain,  
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:  
Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees

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Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains steep by steep;  
And there by zephyrs, streams and birds and bees,

The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep;  
And in the midst of this wide quietness

A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,

With buds and bells, and stars without a name,

With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,

Who, breeding flowers, will never breed the same;

And there shall be for thee all soft delight

That shadowy thought can win,

A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,

To let the warm Love in!

### *Ode to Autumn*

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness!  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease,

For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by a winnowing wind;

Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,

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Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers;  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music, too,  
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft  
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

### *Ode on Melancholy*

NO, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist  
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kist  
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

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But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;  
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous  
tongue  
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

### *Fragment of an Ode to Maia*

(WRITTEN ON MAY-DAY, 1818)

*Here is a lyric worth saving if only for the one immortal line,*

*"Leaving great verse unto a little clan."*

MOTHER of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!  
May I sing to thee  
As thou wast hymnèd on the shores of Baiæ?  
Or may I woo thee

## JOHN KEATS

In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles  
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,  
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,  
Leaving great verse unto a little clan?  
O give me their old vigor! and unheard  
Save of the quiet primrose, and the span  
Of heaven, and few ears,  
Rounded by thee, my song should die away  
Content as theirs,  
Rich in the simple worship of a day.

### *Bards of Passion and of Mirth*

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK PAGE BEFORE BEAUMONT AND  
FLETCHER'S TRAGI-COMEDY "THE FAIR MAID OF THE INN"

**B**ARDS of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Have ye souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new?  
Yes, and those of heaven commune  
With the spheres of sun and moon;  
With the noise of fountains wondrous,  
And the parle of voices thunderous;  
With the whisper of heaven's trees  
And one another, in soft ease  
Seated on Elysian lawns  
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;  
Underneath large blue-bells tented,  
Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
And the rose herself has got  
Perfume which on earth is not;  
Where the nightingale doth sing

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Not a senseless, trancèd thing,  
But divine melodious truth;  
Philosophic numbers smooth;  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then  
On the earth ye live again;  
And the souls ye left behind you  
Teach us, here, the way to find you,  
Where your other souls are joying,  
Never slumbered, never cloying.  
Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
To mortals, of their little week;  
Of their sorrows and delights;  
Of their passions and their spites;  
Of their glory and their shame;  
What doth strengthen and what maim.  
Thus ye teach us, every day,  
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Ye have souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new!

### *La Belle Dame sans Merci*

AH, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

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Ah, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
So haggard and so woe-begone?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow  
With anguish moist and fever dew;  
And on thy cheek a fading rose  
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,  
Full beautiful—a faery's child,  
Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She looked at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed  
And nothing else saw all day long,  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild and manna-dew,  
And sure in language strange she said,  
"I love thee true!"

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she wept and sighed full sore;  
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes  
With kisses four.



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And there she lullèd me asleep,  
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!  
The latest dream I ever dreamed  
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
Who cried—"La belle Dame sans merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloom  
With horrid warning gapèd wide,  
And I awoke and found me here  
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here  
Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

### *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*

*The last four lines of this famous sonnet form one of the most tremendous climaxes in literature. Yet it contains a glaring misstatement, in crediting Cortez, instead of Balboa, with the discovery of the Pacific Ocean.*

MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told

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That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:  
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

### *The Grasshopper and Cricket*

THE poetry of earth is never dead:  
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead:  
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead  
In summer luxury, he has never done  
With his delights, for, when tired out with fun,  
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never:  
On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,  
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,  
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

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*Last Sonnet*

BRIGHT Star, would I were steadfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priest-like task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—

No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

*Lines on the Mermaid Tavern*

SOULS of Poets dead and gone,  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?  
Have ye tippled drink more fine  
Than mine host's Canary wine?  
Or are fruits of Paradise  
Sweeter than those dainty pies  
Of venison? O generous food!  
Dressed as though bold Robin Hood  
Would, with his maid Marian, .  
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

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I have heard that on a day  
Mine host's sign-board flew away,  
Nobody knew whither, till  
An astrologer's old quill  
To a sheepskin gave the story,  
Said he saw you in your glory,  
Underneath a new old sign  
Sipping beverage divine,  
And pledging with contented smack  
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

### *In a Drear-nighted December*

**I**N a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy tree,  
Thy branches ne'er remember  
Their green felicity:  
The north cannot undo them,  
With a sleety whistle through them;  
Nor frozen thawings glue them  
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy brook,  
Thy bubblings ne'er remember  
Apollo's summer look;  
But with a sweet forgetting,

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They stay their crystal fretting,  
Never, never petting  
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many  
A gentle girl and boy!  
But were there ever any  
Writhed not at passèd joy?  
To know the change and feel it,  
When there is none to heal it,  
Nor numbèd sense to steal it,  
Was never said in rhyme.

### *The Eve of St. Agnes*

#### I

ST. AGNES' Eve—ah, bitter chill it was!  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seemed taking flight for heaven without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

#### II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees;

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The sculptured dead, on each side, seemed to freeze,  
Imprisoned in black, purgatorial rails;  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

### III

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue  
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;  
But no—already had his death-bell rung;  
The joys of all his life were said and sung;  
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve;  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

### IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft:  
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,  
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,  
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;  
The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests;  
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their  
breasts.

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### V

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily  
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay  
Of old romance. These let us wish away;  
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one lady there,  
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,  
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

### VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
And soft adorings from their loves receive  
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright;  
As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

### VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline;  
The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
She scarcely heard; her maiden eyes divine,  
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by—she heeded not at all; in vain  
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,  
And back retired, not cooled by high disdain,  
But she saw not; her heart was elsewhere;  
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

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### VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,  
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short;  
The hallowed hour was near at hand; she sighs  
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort  
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;  
Mid looks of love, defiance, hate and scorn,  
Hoodwinked with fairy fancy; all amorn  
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

### IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,  
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
All saints to give him sight of Madeline;  
But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;  
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things  
have been.

### X

He ventures in; let no buzzed whisper tell;  
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
Will storm his heart, love's feverous citadel;  
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
Against his lineage; not one breast affords  
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.



## JOHN KEATS

### XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,  
Shuffling alone with ivory-headed wand,  
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
The sound of merriment and chorus bland.  
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,  
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,  
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place:  
They are all here to-night, the whole bloodthirsty race!"

### XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;  
He had a fever late, and in the fit  
He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land,  
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
More tame for his gray hairs—alas me! flit!  
Flit like a ghost away!"—"Ah, gossip dear,  
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
And tell me how—" "Good saints, not here, not here;  
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

### XIII

He followed through a lowly archèd way,  
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume:  
And as she muttered "Well-a—well-a-day!"  
He found him in a little moonlight room,  
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he;  
"O, tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

## JOHN KEATS

### XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve,  
Yet men will murder upon holy days:  
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
And be liege-lord of all the elves and fays,  
To venture so. It fills me with amaze  
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!  
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays  
This very night; good angels her deceive!  
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

### XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
Like puzzled urchin on an agèd crone  
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,  
As spectaclèd she sits in chimney nook.  
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

### XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart  
Made purple riot; then doth he propose  
A stratagem that makes the beldame start;  
"A cruel man and impious thou art!  
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and dream  
Alone with her good angels, far apart  
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem  
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

## JOHN KEATS

### XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear!"  
Quoth Porphyro; "O, may I ne'er find grace  
When my weak voice shall whisper its last **prayer**,  
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:  
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;  
Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
And beard them, though they be more fanged than  
wolves and bears."

### XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth she bring  
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,  
That Angela gives promise she will do  
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal **or woe**.

### XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
Him in a closet, of such privacy  
That he might see her beauty unespied,  
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride;  
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,  
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
Never on such a night have lovers met,  
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## JOHN KEATS

### XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the dame;  
"All cates and dainties shall be storèd there  
Quickly on this feast-night; by the tambour frame  
Her own lute thou wilt see; no time to spare,  
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
Wait here, my child, with patience kneel in prayer  
The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

### XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed:  
The dame returned, and whispered in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed and chaste;  
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.  
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

### XXII

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline. St. Agnes' charmèd maid,  
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware;  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turned, and down the agèd gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed!  
She comes, she comes again, like a ring-dove frayed and  
fled.

## JOHN KEATS

### XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died;  
She closed the door, she panted, all akin  
To spirits of the air, and visions wide;  
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;  
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

### XXIV

A casement high and triple-arched there was,  
All garlanded with carven imageries  
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;  
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and  
kings.

### XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon:  
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
And on her hair a glory, like a saint;  
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,  
Save wings, for heaven. Porphyro grew faint:  
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

## JOHN KEATS

### XXVI

Anon his heart revives; her vespers done,  
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;  
Uncclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;  
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees  
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees.  
Half hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

### XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,  
Until the poppièd warmth of sleep oppressed  
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
Flown like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;  
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;  
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

### XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,  
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced  
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
And breathed himself; then from the closet crept,  
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,  
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how fast  
she slept.

## JOHN KEATS

### XXIX

Then by the bedside, where the faded moon  
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon  
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet.  
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:  
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

### XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
In blanchèd linen, smooth and lavendered;  
While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince and plum and gourd,  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred  
From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,  
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

### XXXI

These delicacies he heaped with glowing hand  
On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
Of wreathèd silver. Sumptuous they stand  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.  
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite;  
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

## JOHN KEATS

### XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm  
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
By the dusk curtains: 'twas a midnight charm  
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:  
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam  
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:  
It seemed he never, never could redeem  
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;  
So mused awhile, entoièd in woofèd fantasies.

### XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,  
Tumultuous, and, in chords that tenderest be,  
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
In Provence called "La belle Dame sans merci",  
Close to her ear touching the melody—  
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan;  
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly  
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone;  
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

### XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep.  
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled  
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;  
At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep.  
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,  
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.



## JOHN KEATS

### XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now  
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
Made tunable with every sweetest vow;  
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear.  
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill and drear!  
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
O, leave me not in this eternal woe,  
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

### XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far  
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star  
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose:  
Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
Blendeth its odor with the violet—  
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows  
Like love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

### XXXVII

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet;  
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"  
'Tis dark; the icèd gusts still rave and beat:  
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!  
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.  
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?  
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing—  
A dove forlorn and lost, with sick, unpruned wing."

## JOHN KEATS

### XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?  
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
After so many hours of toil and quest,  
A famished pilgrim—saved by miracle.  
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest,  
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

### XXXIX

"Hark! 't is an elfin-storm from faery land,  
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand—  
The bloated wassaillers will never heed:—  
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see—  
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

### XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears.  
For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.  
In all the house was heard no human sound.  
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;  
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk and hound,  
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

## JOHN KEATS

### XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall!  
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,  
Where lay the porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flagon by his side.  
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns;  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide;  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;  
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

### XLII

And they are gone! ay, ages long ago  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;  
The beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

JOHN KEATS

*Beauty*

FROM "ENDYMION"

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways  
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils,  
With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms;  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the Heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences  
For one short hour; no, even as the trees  
That whisper round a Temple becomes soon  
Dear as the Temple's self, so does the moon,  
The passion poesy, glories infinite,  
Haunt us till they become a cheering light

## JOHN KEATS

Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,  
That, whether there be shine or gloom o'ercast,  
They always must be with us, or we die.

### *The Forest*

FROM "ENDYMION"

UPON the sides of Latmos was outspread  
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed  
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots  
Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.  
And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,  
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep  
A lamb strayed far a-down those inmost glens,  
Never again saw he the happy pens  
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,  
Over the hills at every nightfall went.  
Among the shepherds, 'twas believèd ever  
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever  
From the white flock, but passed unworrièd  
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,  
Until it came to some unfooted plains  
Where fed the herds of Pan: ay, great his gains  
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,  
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,  
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly  
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see  
Stems thronging all around between the swell  
Of turf and slanting branches; who could tell  
The freshness of the space of heaven above,  
Edged round with dark tree-tops? through which a dove  
Would often beat its wings, and often too  
A little cloud would move across the blue.

JOHN KEATS

*The Sacrifice to Pan*

FROM "ENDYMION"

FULL in the middle of this pleasantness  
There stood a marble altar, with a tress  
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew  
Had taken faery phantasies to strew  
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,  
And so the dawnèd light in pomp receive.  
For 'twas the morn; Apollo's upward fire  
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre  
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein  
A melancholy spirit well might win  
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine  
Into the winds; rain-scented eglantine  
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;  
The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run  
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;  
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass  
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed ten-fold,  
To feel the sunrise and its glories old.

Now, while the silent workings of the dawn  
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn  
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped  
A troop of little children garlanded,  
Who, gathering round the altar, seemed to pry  
Earnestly round, as wishing to espy  
Some folk of holiday; nor had they waited  
For many moments, ere their ears were sated  
With a faint breath of music, which even then  
Filled out its voice, and died away again.  
Within a little space again it gave

## JOHN KEATS

Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,  
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking  
Through copse-clad valleys, ere their death o'ertaking  
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we  
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light  
Fair faces, and a rush of garments white,  
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last  
Into the widest alley they all passed,  
Making directly for the woodland altar.  
O kindly Muse! let not my weak tongue falter  
In telling of this goodly company,  
Of their old piety, and of their glee;  
But let a portion of ethereal dew  
Fall on my head, and presently unmew  
My soul, that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,  
Bearing the burden of a shepherd's song,  
Each having a white wicker over-brimmed  
With April's tender younglings: next, well-trimmed,  
A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks  
As may be read of in Arcadian books,  
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,  
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,  
Let his divinity o'erflowing die  
In music, through the vales of Thessaly;  
Some idly trailed their sheep-hooks on the ground,  
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound  
With ebon-tippèd flutes; close after these,  
Now coming from beneath the forest-trees,  
A venerable priest full soberly,

## JOHN KEATS

Begin with ministering looks; alway his eye  
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,  
And after him his sacred vestments swept.  
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,  
Of mingled wine, outsparkling generous light;  
And in his left he held a basket full  
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull—  
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still  
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.  
His aged head, crownèd with beechen wreath,  
Seemed like a poll of ivy in the teeth  
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd  
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud  
Their share of the ditty. After them appeared,  
Up-followed by a multitude that reared  
Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought car,  
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar  
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown:  
Who stood therein did seem of great renown  
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,  
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;  
And, for those simple times, his garments were  
A chieftan king's; beneath his breast, half bare,  
Was hung a silver bugle, and between  
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen:  
A smile was on his countenance; he seemed,  
To common lookers-on, like one who dreamed  
Of idleness in groves Elysian;  
But there were some who feelingly could scan  
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,  
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip  
Through his forgotten hands; then would they sigh  
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,  
Of logs piled solemnly. Ah, well-a-day!  
Why should our young Endymion pine away?



## JOHN KEATS

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,  
Stood silent round the shrine; each look was changed  
To sudden veneration; women meek  
Beckoned their sons to silence; while each cheek  
Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.  
Endymion, too, without a forest peer,  
Stood, wan and pale, and with an awèd face,  
Among his brothers of the mountain chase.  
In midst of all, the venerable priest  
Eyed them with joy, from greatest to the least,  
And, after lifting up his agèd hands,  
Thus spake he: "Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!  
Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:  
Whether descended from beneath the rocks  
That overtop your mountains; whether come  
From valleys where the pipe is never dumb;  
Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs  
Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly furze  
Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge  
Nibbled their fill at ocean's very marge,  
Whose mellow reeds are touched with sounds forlorn  
By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn;  
Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare  
The scrip with needments for the mountain air,  
And all ye gentle girls who foster up  
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup  
Will put choice honey for a favored youth:  
Yea, every one attend! for in good truth  
Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.  
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than  
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains  
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains  
Greened over April's lap? No howling sad  
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had  
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.

## JOHN KEATS

The earth is glad: the merry lark has poured  
His early song against yon breezy sky,  
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

Thus ending, on the shrine he heaped a spire  
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;  
Anon he stained the thick and spongy sod  
With wine, in honor of the shepherd-god.  
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while  
Bay-leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright  
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light  
Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

### *A Hymn to Pan*

FROM "ENDYMION"

O THOU whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death  
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;  
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress  
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;  
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds  
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;  
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,  
By thy love's milky brow!  
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,  
Hear us, great Pan!

## JOHN KEATS

"O thou for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles  
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,  
What time thou wanderest at eventide  
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side  
Of thine enmossèd realms: O thou to whom  
Broad-leavèd fig-trees even now foredoom  
Their ripened fruitage; yellow-girted bees  
Their golden honeycombs; our village leas  
Their fairest blossomed beans and popped corn;  
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,  
To sing for thee; low-creeping strawberries  
Their summer coolness; pent-up butterflies  
Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh-budding year  
All its completions—be quickly near,  
By every wind that nods the mountain-pine,  
O forester divine!

"Thou to whom every fawn and satyr flies  
For willing service; whether to surprise  
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit;  
Or upward ragged precipices flit  
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;  
Or by mysterious enticement draw  
Bewildered shepherds to their path again;  
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,  
And gather up all fancifullest shells  
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,  
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;  
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,  
The while they pelt each other on the crown  
With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones brown,—  
By all the echoes that about thee ring,  
Hear us, O satyr king!

## JOHN KEATS

"O Harkener to the loud-clapping shears,  
While ever and anon to his shorn peers  
A ram goes bleating! Winder of the horn,  
When snouted wild boars routing tender corn  
Anger our huntsman! Breather round our farms,  
To keep off mildews and all weather harms!  
Strange ministrant of undescribèd sounds,  
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,  
And wither drearily on barren moors!  
Dread opener of the mysterious doors  
Leading to universal knowledge!—see,  
Great son of Dryope,  
The many that are come to pay their vows  
With leaves about their brows!

"Be still the unimaginable lodge  
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge  
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,  
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth,  
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:  
Be still a symbol of immensity;  
A firmament reflected in a sea;  
An element filling the space between;  
An unknown—but no more: we humbly screen  
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,  
And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,  
Conjure thee to receive our humble pæan,  
Upon thy Mount Lycean!"

## JOHN KEATS

### *Diana*

FROM "ENDYMION"

A BRIGHT something, sailing down apace,  
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:  
Again I looked, and, O ye deities,  
Who from Olympus watch our destinies!  
Whence that completed form of all completeness?  
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?  
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, oh! where  
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?  
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun;  
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun  
Such follying before thee—yet she had,  
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;  
And they were simply gordianed up and braided,  
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded  
Her pearl-round ears, white neck, and orbèd brow;  
The which were blended in, I know not how,  
With such a Paradise of lips and eyes,  
Blush-tinted cheeks, half-smiles, and faintest sighs,  
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings  
And plays about its fancy, till the stings  
Of human neighborhood envenom all.  
Unto what awful power shall I call?  
To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering feet,  
More bluely veined, more soft, more whitely sweet  
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose  
From out her cradle shell. The wind outblows  
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;  
'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million  
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed  
Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed,  
Handfuls of daisies.

## JOHN KEATS

She took an airy range,  
And then, towards me, like a very maid  
Came blushing, waning, willing and afraid,  
And pressed me by the hand. Ah! 'twas too much;  
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch.

### *Sleep*

FROM "ENDYMION"

O MAGIC sleep! O comfortable bird,  
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind  
Till it is hushed and smooth! O unconfined  
Restraint! imprisoned liberty! great key  
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves  
And moonlight; ay, to all the mazy world  
Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurled  
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,  
But renovates and lives?

### *Cast Asleep*

FROM "ENDYMION"

AFTER a thousand mazes overgone,  
At last, with sudden step, he came upon  
A chamber, myrtle walled, embowered high,  
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,  
And more of beautiful and strange beside:  
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,  
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth  
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,

## JOHN KEATS

Than sighs could fathom or contentment reach:  
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,  
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,  
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—  
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve  
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve  
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light;  
But rather, giving them to the filled sight  
Officiously. Sideway his face reposed  
On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,  
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth  
To slumbery pout; just as the morning south  
Disparts a dew-lipped rose. Above his head,  
Four lily-stalks did their white honors wed  
To make a coronal; and round him grew  
All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue,  
Together intertwined and trammelled fresh:  
The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,  
Shading its Æthiop berries; and woodbine,  
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;  
Convolvulus in streakèd vases flush;  
The creeper mellowing for an autumn blush;  
And virgin's-bower, trailing airily;  
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,  
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.  
One, kneeling to a lyre, touched the strings,  
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;  
And, ever and anon, uprose to look  
At the youth's slumber; while another took  
A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,  
And shook it on his hair; another flew  
In through the woven roof, and, fluttering-wise,  
Rained violets upon his sleeping eyes.

JOHN KEATS

*From "Hyperion"*

A FRAGMENT

I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
Still as the silence round about his lair;  
Forest on forest hung about his head  
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.  
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large footmarks went,  
No further than to where his feet had strayed,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unscathed; and his realmless eyes were closed;  
While his bowed head seemed listening to the Earth,  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from his place;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand  
Touched his wide shoulders, after bending low  
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
She was a Goddess of the infant world;



## JOHN KEATS

By her in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have taken  
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;  
Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel.  
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestaled haply in a palace court,  
When sages looked to Egypt for their lore.  
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:  
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.  
There was a listening fear in her regard,  
As if calamity had but begun:  
As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear  
Was with its stored thunder laboring up.  
One hand she pressed upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;  
The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
She laid, and to the level of his ear  
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
In solemn tenor and deep organ tone:  
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
Would come in these like accents; O how frail  
To that large utterance of the early Gods!

"Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?  
I have no comfort for thee, no not one:  
I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'  
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;  
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
Has from thy sceptre passed; and all the air  
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,

## JOHN KEATS

Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house:  
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands  
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
O aching time! O moments big as years!  
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,  
And press it so upon our weary griefs  
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
Saturn, sleep on: O thoughtless, why did I  
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?  
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?  
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a trancèd summer-night,  
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,  
Tall oaks, branch-charmèd by the earnest stars,  
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
Save from one gradual solitary gust  
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;  
So came these words and went; the while in tears  
She touched her fair large forehead to the ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,  
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,  
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;  
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope  
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,  
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;  
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,  
That inlet to severe magnificence  
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

## JOHN KEATS

He entered, but he entered full of wrath;  
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire.  
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,  
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,  
Until he reached the great main cupola;  
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,  
And from the basements deep to the high towers  
Jarred his own golden region; and before  
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,  
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,  
To this result: "O dreams of day and night!  
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!  
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!  
O lank-eared Phantoms of black-weeded pools  
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why  
Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
To see and to behold these horrors new?  
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?  
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,  
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,  
Of all my lucent empire? It is left  
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.  
The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,  
I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.  
Even here, into my centre of repose,  
The shady visions come to domineer,  
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.  
Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!  
Over the fiery frontier of my realms

## JOHN KEATS

I will advance a terrible right arm  
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,  
And bid old Saturn take his throne again."

He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier threat  
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth;  
For as in theatres of crowded men  
Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"  
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale  
Bestirred themselves, thrice horrible and cold;  
And from the mirrored level where he stood  
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.  
At this, through all his bulk an agony  
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,  
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular  
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed  
From over-strained might. Released, he fled  
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours  
Before the dawn in season due should blush,  
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
Cleared them of heavy vapors, burst them wide  
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.  
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode  
Each day from east to west the heavens through,  
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds:  
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,  
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,  
Glowed through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
Sweet-shapèd lightnings from the nadir deep  
Up to the zenith—hieroglyphics old,  
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers  
Then living on the earth, with laboring thought  
Won from the gaze of many centuries:  
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge

## JOHN KEATS

Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,  
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb  
Possessed for glory, two fair argent wings,  
Ever exalted at the God's approach:  
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense  
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;  
While still the dazzling globe maintained eclipse,  
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.  
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne  
And bid the day begin, if but for change.  
He might not: No, though a primeval God:  
The sacred seasons might not be disturbed.  
Therefore the operations of the dawn  
Stayed in their birth, even as here 'tis told.  
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,  
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide  
Opened upon the dusk demesnes of night;  
And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,  
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent  
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;  
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
He stretched himself in grief and radiance faint.  
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars  
Looked down on him with pity, and the voice  
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,  
Thus whispered low and solemn in his ear.

"O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries  
All unrevealed even to the powers  
Which met at thy creating; at whose joy  
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,  
I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;  
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,

## JOHN KEATS

Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,  
Manifestations of that beauteous life  
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space;  
Of these new-formed art thou, oh brightest child!  
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!  
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion  
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,  
I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!  
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice  
Found way from forth the thunders round his head!  
Pale wox I and in vapors hid my face.  
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:  
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.  
Divine ye were created, and divine  
In sad demeanor, solemn, undisturbed,  
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled:  
Now I behold in you fear, hope and wrath;  
Actions of rage and passion; even as  
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,  
In men who die. This is the grief, O Son!  
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!  
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,  
As thou canst move about, an evident God;  
And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
Ethereal presence: I am but a voice;  
My life is but the life of winds and tides,  
No more than winds and tides can I avail:  
But thou canst. Be thou therefore in the van  
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
Before the tense string murmur. To the earth!  
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.  
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."

## JOHN KEATS

Ere half this region-whisper had come down,  
Hyperion arose, and on the stars  
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide  
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:  
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.  
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,  
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,  
Forward he stooped over the airy shore,  
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

### II

**J**UST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings  
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,  
And Saturn gained with Thea that sad place  
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourned.  
It was a den where no insulting light  
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans  
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seemed  
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;  
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies  
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.  
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,  
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge  
Stubborned with iron. All were not assembled:  
Some chained in torture, and some wandering,  
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,  
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,  
With many more, the brawniest in assault,  
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;  
Dungeoned in opaque element, to keep

## JOHN KEATS

Their clenched teeth still clenched, and all their limbs  
Locked up like veins of metal, cramped and screwed;  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed  
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.  
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;  
Far from her moon had Phœbe wanderèd;  
And many else were free to roam abroad,  
But for the main, here found they covert drear.  
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque  
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor.  
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,  
In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.  
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbor gave  
Or word, or look, or action of despair.  
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace  
Lay by him, and a shattered rib of rock  
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
Iäpetus another; in his grasp,  
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue  
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurled length  
Dead; and because the creature could not spit  
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,  
As though in pain; for still upon the flint  
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him  
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
Though feminine, than any of her sons:  
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
For she was prophesying of her glory;  
And in her wide imagination stood



## JOHN KEATS

Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,  
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.  
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,  
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.  
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,  
Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else.  
Shadowed Enceladus; once tame and mild  
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;  
Now tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted, wroth,  
He meditated, plotted, and even now  
Was hurling mountains in that second war,  
Not long delayed, that scared the younger Gods  
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.  
Nor far hence Atlas; and beside him prone  
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbored close  
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap  
Sobbed Clymene among her tangled hair.  
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet  
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;  
No shape distinguishable, more than when  
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:  
And many else whose names may not be told.  
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,  
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chant  
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd  
With damp and slippery footing from a depth  
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff  
Their heads appeared, and up their stature grew  
Till on the level height their steps found ease:  
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms  
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,  
And sidelong fixed her eye on Saturn's face:  
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God  
At war with all the frailty of grief,

## JOHN KEATS

Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,  
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.  
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate  
Had poured a mortal oil upon his head,  
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,  
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass  
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart  
Is persecuted more, and fevered more,  
When it is nighing to the mournful house  
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;  
So Saturn, as he walked into the midst,  
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,  
But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,  
"Titans, behold your God!" at which some groaned;  
Some started on their feet; some also shouted;  
Some wept, some wailed, all bowed with reverence;  
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,  
Showed her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,  
Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.  
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise  
Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
With hushing finger, how he means to load  
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,  
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:  
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;  
Which, when it ceases in this mountained world,  
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,  
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom  
Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopped short,

## JOHN KEATS

Leave the dinned air vibrating silverly.  
Thus grew it up: "Not in my own sad breast,  
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,  
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:  
Not in the legends of the first of days,  
Studied from that old spirit-leavèd book  
Which starry Uranus with finger bright  
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves  
Low-ebbed still hid it up in shallow gloom.

\* \* \* \* \*

"O'erwhelmed, and spurned, and battered, ye are here!  
O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'—Ye groan:  
Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan. What can I then?  
O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!  
What can I! Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,  
How we can war, how engine our great wrath!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,  
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
But cogitation in his watery shades,  
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,  
In murmurs, which his first-endeavoring tongue  
Caught infant-like from the far foamed sands.  
"O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,  
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!  
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,  
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.  
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof  
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop;  
And in the proof much comfort will I give,  
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.  
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou  
Hast sifted well the atom-universe;

## JOHN KEATS

But for this reason, that thou art the King,  
And only blind from sheer supremacy,  
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,  
Through which I wandered to eternal truth.  
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
So art thou not the last; it cannot be:  
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.  
From chaos and parental darkness came  
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,  
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
And with it light, and light, engendering  
Upon its own producer, forthwith touched  
The whole enormous matter into life.  
Upon that very hour, our parentage,  
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:  
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,  
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.  
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain;  
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,  
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!  
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;  
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
In will, in action free, companionship,  
And thousand other signs of purer life;  
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
And fated to excel us, as we pass  
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we  
Thereby more conquered, than by us the rule  
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull sun  
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,

## JOHN KEATS

And feedeth still, more comely than itself?  
Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves?  
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove  
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings  
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?  
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs  
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,  
But eagles golden-feathered, who do tower  
Above us in their beauty, and must reign  
In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law  
That first in beauty should be first in might:  
Yea, by that law, another race may drive  
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.  
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,  
My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?  
Have ye beheld his chariot, foamed along  
By noble wingèd creatures he hath made?  
I saw him on the calmèd waters scud,  
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell  
To all my empire: farewell sad I took,  
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate  
Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best  
Give consolation in this woe extreme.  
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

\* \* \* \* \*

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,  
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name  
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,  
A pallid gleam across his features stern:  
Not savage, for he saw full many a God  
Wroth as himself. He looked upon them all,  
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,  
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks

## JOHN KEATS

Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel  
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.  
In pale and silver silence they remained,  
Till suddenly a splendor, like the morn,  
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
And every gulf, and every chasm old,  
And every height, and every sullen depth,  
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:  
And all the everlasting cataracts,  
And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
It was Hyperion—a granite peak  
His bright feet touched, and there he stayed to view  
The misery his brilliance had betrayed  
To the most hateful seeing of itself.  
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,  
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade  
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk  
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun  
To one who travels from the dusking East:  
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp  
He uttered, while his hands contemplative  
He pressed together, and in silence stood.  
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods  
At sight of the dejected King of Day.

### III

**T**HUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,  
Amazèd were those Titans utterly.  
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;  
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:  
A solitary sorrow best befits

JOHN KEATS

Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.  
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find  
Many a fallen old Divinity  
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.  
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,  
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe  
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;  
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.

GEORGE DARLEY

IRELAND, 1795-1846

*The Fallen Star*

A STAR is gone! a star is gone!  
There is a blank in Heaven;  
One of the cherub choir has done  
His airy course this even.

He sat upon the orb of fire  
That hung for ages there,  
And lent his music to the choir  
That haunts the nightly air.

GEORGE DARLEY

But when his thousand years are passed,  
With a cherubic sigh  
He vanished with his car at last,  
For even cherubs die!

Hear how his angel-brothers mourn—  
The minstrels of the spheres—  
Each chiming sadly in his turn  
And dropping splendid tears.

The planetary sisters all  
Join in the fatal song,  
And weep this hapless brother's fall,  
Who sang with them so long.

But deepest of the choral band  
The Lunar Spirit sings,  
And with a bass-according hand  
Sweeps all her sullen strings.

From the deep chambers of the dome  
Where sleepless Uriel lies,  
His rude harmonic thunders come  
Mingled with mighty sighs.

The thousand car-borne cherubim,  
The wandering eleven,  
All join to chant the dirge of him  
Who fell just now from Heaven.



THOMAS CARLYLE

SCOTLAND, 1795-1881

*To-Day*

SO here hath been dawning  
Another blue Day:  
Think wilt thou let it  
Slip useless away?

Out of Eternity  
This new Day is born;  
Into Eternity,  
At night, will return.

Behold it aforetime  
No eye ever did:  
So soon it for ever  
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning  
Another blue Day:  
Think, wilt thou let it  
Slip useless away?

*This Mysterious Mankind*

*The mighty Thomas—who shook the nineteenth century with his protest and his prophecy—wrote only a few verses, and none of these were of a high order. Yet he was essentially a poet, a king-poet; and his prose pages are shot through with all the glowing fires of a lofty poetry. We get frequent inshinings of the lyric and the epic Muse in*

## THOMAS CARLYLE

*his "French Revolution" and in his "Heroes and Hero-Worship." No poet of any land or of any age has ever surpassed the high import in the marching thunders of this brief passage from his "Sartor Resartus." Ah, the power and the pathos of it all!*

GENERATION after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body; and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission APPEARS. What Force and Fire is in each he expends: one grinding in the mill of Industry, one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science, one madly dashed to pieces on the rocks of Strife in war with his fellow:—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled, his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow.

Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane, haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are levelled, and her seas filled up in our passage: can the Earth, which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive? On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped-in: the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence? O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.

"We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little Life  
Is rounded with a sleep."

## THOMAS HOOD

ENGLAND, 1798-1845

**T**HOMAS HOOD was born and died in London. His life was one of severe toil and much suffering, always sustained, however, with manly resolution and cheerful spirit. He wrote voluminously, both in verse and prose. He was a man of peculiar and original genius, which manifested itself with equal power and ease in humor and pathos.

His revolutionary *Song of the Shirt* appeared in *Punch* a short time before Hood died, himself a victim of overwork. It was written at a time when the attention of benevolent English men and women had been awakened to the inadequate wages paid to poor needlewomen, and their consequent distress. Its timely appearance, as well as its high literary merit, produced a great effect. It is valuable as an expression of that deep and impassioned sympathy with suffering, which was a leading trait in Hood's nature. His few serious poems are instinct with imagination and true pathos.

### *The Song of the Shirt*

**W**ITH fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread—  
Stitch—stitch—stitch!  
In poverty, hunger and dirt,  
And still, with a voice of dolorous pitch,  
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

THOMAS HOOD

“Work—work—work!  
While the cock is crowing aloof!  
And work—work—work!  
Till the stars shine through the roof!  
It’s O, to be a slave  
Along with the barbarous Turk,  
Where woman has never a soul to save,  
If THIS is Christian work.

“Work—work—work!  
Till the brain begins to swim;  
Work—work—work!  
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!  
Seam and gusset and band,  
Band and gusset and seam,  
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,  
And sew them on in my dream.

“O men with sisters dear!  
O men with mothers and wives!  
It is not linen you’re wearing out,  
But human creatures’ lives!  
Stitch—stitch—stich!  
In poverty, hunger and dirt,  
Sewing at once, with a double thread,  
A SHROUD as well as a shirt!

“But why do I talk of death,  
That phantom of grisly bone?  
I hardly fear his terrible shape,  
It seems so like my own—  
It seems so like my own,  
Because of the fast I keep:

THOMAS HOOD

O God! that bread should be so dear,  
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!  
My labor never flags;  
And what are its wages? A bed of straw.  
A crust of bread—and rags:  
A shattered roof—and this naked floor—  
A table—a broken chair—  
And a wall so blank my shadow I thank  
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!  
From weary chime to chime;  
Work—work—work!  
As prisoners work for crime!  
Band and gusset and seam,  
Seam and gusset and band,  
Till the heart is sick and the brain benumbed,  
As well as the weary hand!

"Work—work—work!  
In the dull December light;  
And work—work—work!  
When the weather is warm and bright;  
While underneath the eaves  
The brooding swallows cling,  
As if to show me their sunny backs,  
And twit me with the spring.

"O, but to breathe the breath  
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet,  
With the sky above my head,  
And the grass beneath my feet!

## THOMAS HOOD

For only one short hour  
To feel as I used to feel,  
Before I knew the woes of want,  
And the walk that costs a meal!

"O, but for one short hour!  
A respite, however brief!  
No blessèd leisure for love or hope,  
But only time for grief!  
A little weeping would ease my heart—  
But in their briny bed  
My tears must stop, for every drop  
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread—  
Stitch—stitch—stitch—  
In poverty, hunger and dirt,  
And still, with a voice of dolorous pitch—  
Would that its tone could reach the rich—  
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

### *Fair Ines*

*Pronouncing Hood "one of the most singularly fanciful of poets," Poe says: "His 'Fair Ines' has always for me an inexpressible charm."*

O SAW ye not fair Ines?  
She's gone into the West,  
To dazzle when the sun is down,  
And rob the world of rest:

THOMAS HOOD

She took our daylight with her,  
The smiles that we love best,  
With morning blushes on her cheek,  
And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,  
Before the fall of night,  
For fear the Moon should shine alone,  
And stars unrivalled bright;  
And blessèd will the lover be  
That walks beneath their light,  
And breathes the love against thy cheek  
I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,  
That gallant cavalier,  
Who rode so gaily by thy side,  
And whispered thee so near!  
Were there no bonny dames at home,  
Or no true lovers here,  
That he should cross the seas to win  
The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,  
Descend along the shore,  
With bands of noble gentlemen,  
And banners waved before;  
And gentle youth and maidens gay,  
And snowy plumes they wore;  
It would have been a beauteous dream—  
If it had been no more!

Alas, alas! fair Ines,  
She went away with song,

## THOMAS HOOD

With Music waiting on her steps,  
And shoutings of the throng;  
But some were sad, and felt no mirth,  
But only Music's wrong,  
In sounds that sang farewell, farewell,  
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!  
That vessel never bore  
So fair a lady on its deck,  
Nor danced so light before.  
Alas for pleasure on the sea,  
And sorrow on the shore!  
The smile that blessed one lover's heart  
Has broken many more!

### *The Death-bed*

WE watched her breathing through  
the night,  
Her breathing soft and low,  
As in her breast the wave of life  
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,  
So slowly moved about,  
As we had lent her half our powers  
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,  
Our fears our hopes belied—  
We thought her dying when she slept,  
And sleeping when she died.



## THOMAS HOOD

For when the morn came dim and sad,  
And chill with early showers,  
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had  
Another morn than ours.

### *The Bridge of Sighs*

*Thackeray called this poem "Hood's Corunna, his Heights of Abraham; sickly, weak, wounded, he fell in the full blaze and fame of that great victory." This poem and "The Song of the Shirt" have a permanent place in the language, because of their message as well as their poetry. "The Bridge of Sighs" is the finer of the two, says T. Earle Welby, because "the voluntary death of a dishonored woman is a deeper tragedy than any abomination of sweated labor."*

ONE more Unfortunate,  
Weary of breath,  
Rashly importunate,  
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashioned so slenderly  
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments  
Clinging like cerements;  
Whilst the wave constantly  
Drips from her clothing;  
Take her up instantly,  
Loving, not loathing.

THOMAS HOOD

Touch her not scornfully;  
Think of her mournfully,  
Gently and humanly;  
Not of the stains of her,  
All that remains of her  
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny  
Into her mutiny  
Rash and undutiful:  
Past all dishonor,  
Death has left on her  
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,  
One of Eve's family—  
Wipe those poor lips of hers  
Oozing so clammyly.

Loop up her tresses  
Escaped from the comb,  
Her fair auburn tresses;  
Whilst wonderment guesses  
Where was her home?

Who was her father?  
Who was her mother?  
Had she a sister?  
Had she a brother?  
Or was there a dearer one  
Still, and a nearer one  
Yet, than all other?

## THOMAS HOOD

Alas! for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun!  
O, it was pitiful!  
Near a whole city full,  
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,  
Fatherly, motherly  
Feelings had changed:  
Love, by harsh evidence,  
Thrown from its eminence;  
Even God's providence  
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver  
So far in the river,  
With many a light  
From window and casement,  
From garret to basement,  
She stood, with amazement,  
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March  
Made her tremble and shiver;  
But not the dark arch,  
Or the black flowing river:  
Mad from life's history,  
Glad to death's mystery,  
Swift to be hurled—  
Anywhere, anywhere  
Out of the world!

THOMAS HOOD

In she plunged boldly—  
No matter how coldly  
The rough river ran—  
Over the brink of it,  
Picture it—think of it,  
Dissolute Man!  
Lave in it, drink of it,  
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashioned so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly  
Stiffen too rigidly,  
Decently, kindly,  
Smooth and compose them;  
And her eyes, close them,  
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring  
Through muddy impurity,  
As when with the daring  
Last look of despairing  
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,  
Spurned by contumely,  
Cold inhumanity,  
Burning insanity,  
Into her rest.  
Cross her hands humbly  
As if praying dumbly,  
Over her breast!

THOMAS HOOD

Owning her weakness,  
Her evil behavior,  
And leaving, with meekness,  
Her sins to her Savior!

*The Dream of Eugene Aram*

'TWAS in the prime of summer time,  
An evening calm and cool,  
And four-and-twenty happy boys  
Came bounding out of school;  
There were some that ran, and some that leapt  
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds  
And souls untouched by sin;  
To a level mead they came, and there  
They drave the wickets in:  
Pleasantly shone the setting sun  
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,  
And shouted as they ran,  
Turning to mirth all things of earth  
As only boyhood can;  
But the usher sat remote from all,  
A melancholy man!

His hat was off, his vest apart,  
To catch heaven's blessèd breeze;  
For a burning thought was in his brow,  
And his bosom ill at ease;  
So he leaned his head on his hands, and read  
The book between his knees.

## THOMAS HOOD

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,  
Nor ever glanced aside—  
For the peace of his soul he read that book  
In the golden eventide;  
Much study had made him very lean,  
And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome;  
With a fast and fervent grasp  
He strained the dusky covers close,  
And fixed the brazen hasp:  
"O God! could I so close my mind,  
And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,  
Some moody turns he took—  
Now up the mead, then down the mead,  
And past a shady nook;  
And, lo! he saw a little boy  
That pored upon a book.

"My gentle lad, what is 't you read—  
Romance or fairy fable?  
Or is it some historic page,  
Of kings and crowns unstable?"  
The young boy gave an upward glance—  
"It is 'The Death of Abel.'"

The usher took six hasty strides,  
As smit with sudden pain—  
Six hasty strides beyond the place,  
Then slowly back again;  
And down he sat beside the lad,  
And talked with him of Cain;

## THOMAS HOOD

And, long since then, of bloody men,  
Whose deeds tradition saves;  
And lonely folk cut off unseen,  
And hid in sudden graves;  
And horrid stabs, in groves forlorn;  
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men  
Shriek upward from the sod;  
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point  
To show the burial clod;  
And unknown facts of guilty acts  
Are seen in dreams from God.

He told how murderers walked the earth  
Beneath the curse of Cain—  
With crimson clouds before their eyes,  
And flames about their brain;  
For blood has left upon their souls  
Its everlasting stain!

"And well," quoth he, "I know, for truth,  
Their pangs must be extreme—  
Woe, woe, unutterable woe!—  
Who spill life's sacred stream!  
For why? Methought, last night I wrought  
A murder, in a dream!

"One that had never done me wrong—  
A feeble man and old;  
I led him to a lonely field—  
The moon shone clear and cold:  
Now here, said I, this man shall die;  
And I will have his gold!

THOMAS HOOD

"Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,  
And one with a heavy stone,  
One hurried gash with a hasty knife—  
And then the deed was done:  
There was nothing lying at my feet  
But lifeless flesh and bone!

"Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,  
That could not do me ill;  
And yet I feared him all the more  
For lying there so still:  
There was a manhood in his look  
That murder could not kill!

"And, lo! the universal air  
Seemed lit with ghastly flame—  
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes  
Were looking down in blame;  
I took the dead man by his hand,  
And called upon his name.

"O God! it made me quake to see  
Such sense within the slain;  
But when I touched the lifeless clay,  
The blood gushed out amain!  
For every clot a burning spot  
Was scorching in my brain!

"My head was like an ardent coal,  
My heart as solid ice;  
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,  
Was at the Devil's price:  
A dozen times I groaned—the dead  
Had never groaned but twice.



## THOMAS HOOD

"And now, from forth the frowning sky,  
From the heaven's topmost height,  
I heard a voice—the awful voice  
Of the blood-avenging sprite:  
'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead,  
And hide it from my sight!'

"I took the dreary body up,  
And cast it in a stream—  
The sluggish water black as ink,  
The depth was so extreme:  
My gentle boy, remember, this  
Is nothing but a dream!

"Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,  
And vanished in the pool;  
Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,  
And washed my forehead cool,  
And sat among the urchins young,  
That evening, in the school.

"O Heaven! to think of their white souls,  
And mine so black and grim!  
I could not share in childish prayer,  
Nor join in evening hymn;  
Like a devil of the pit I seemed,  
Mid holy cherubim!

"And Peace went with them, one and all,  
And each calm pillow spread;  
But Guilt was my grim chamberlain,  
That lighted me to bed,  
And drew my midnight curtains round  
With fingers bloody red!

THOMAS HOOD

"All night I lay in agony,  
In anguish dark and deep;  
My fevered eyes I dared not close,  
But stared aghast at Sleep:  
For Sin had rendered unto her  
The keys of hell to keep!

"All night I lay in agony,  
From weary chime to chime;  
With one besetting horrid hint  
That racked me all the time—  
A mighty yearning, like the first  
Fierce impulse unto crime—

"One stern tyrannic thought, that made  
All other thoughts its slave!  
Stronger and stronger every pulse  
Did that temptation crave—  
Still urging me to go and see  
The dead man in his grave!

"Heavily I rose up, as soon  
As light was in the sky,  
And sought the black accursèd pool  
With a wild, misgiving eye;  
And I saw the dead in the river-bed,  
For the faithless stream was dry.

"Merrily rose the lark, and shook  
The dew-drop from its wing;  
But I never marked its morning flight,  
I never heard it sing:  
For I was stooping once again  
Under the horrid thing.

THOMAS HOOD

"With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,  
I took him up and ran;  
There was no time to dig a grave  
Before the day began—  
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,  
I hid the murdered man!

"And all that day I read in school,  
But my thought was elsewhere;  
As soon as the midday task was done,  
In secret I was there—  
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,  
And still the corse was bare!

"Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep—  
Or land or sea, though he should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

"So wills the fierce avenging sprite,  
Till blood for blood atones!  
Ay, though he's buried in a cave,  
And trodden down with stones,  
And years have rotted off his flesh—  
The world shall see his bones!

"O God! that horrid, horrid dream  
Besets me now awake!  
Again—again, with dizzy brain,  
The human life I take;  
And my red right hand grows raging hot,  
Like Cranmer's at the stake.

## THOMAS HOOD

"And still no peace for the restless clay  
Will weave or mold allow;  
The horrid thing pursues my soul—  
It stands before me now!"  
The fearful boy looked up, and saw  
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep  
The urchin eyelids kissed,  
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,  
Through the cold and heavy mist;  
And Eugene Aram walked between,  
With gyves upon his wrist.

### *From "The Haunted House"*

*"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old,  
But something ails it now: the place is curst."  
From "Hart-Leap Well," by Wordsworth.*

*I could find no copy of "The Haunted House" in any anthology, either British or American. So, in order to get it for you, gentle readers, I have cut it (slightly abridged) out of my beloved large-paper copy of the poems of Hood. I find that my choice of this poem is approved, so to speak, by the great Edgar Allan Poe; for he says in his lecture on "The Poetic Principle": "'The Haunted House' is one of the truest poems ever written—one of the most unexceptionable—one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal—imaginative."*

## THOMAS HOOD

### I

WITH shattered panes the grassy court was  
starred;  
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after;  
And through the ragged roof the sky shone, barred  
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

The flower grew wild and rankly as the weed,  
Roses with thistles struggled for espial,  
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed  
Had overgrown the dial.

But, gay or gloomy, steadfast or infirm,  
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration;  
All times and tides were lost in one long term  
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the porch, she found  
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough;  
And on the lawn—within its turfy mound—  
The rabbit made his burrow.

The rabbit wild and gray, that flitted through  
The shrubby clumps, and frisked, and sat, and vanished,  
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew  
His enemy was banished.

THOMAS HOOD

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,  
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted;  
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond  
Of solitude, alighted.

The moping heron, motionless and stiff,  
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,  
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if  
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard, except from far away,  
The ringing of the whitewall's shrilly laughter,  
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,  
That Echo murmured after.

But Echo never mocked the human tongue;  
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,  
A secret curse on that old building hung,  
And its deserted garden.

The vine unpruned, and the neglected peach,  
Drooped from the wall with which they used to grapple;  
And on the cankered tree, in easy reach,  
Rotted the golden apple.

The fountain was a-dry—neglect and time  
Had marred the work of artisan and mason,  
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,  
Sprawled in the ruined basin.

The statue, fallen from its marble base,  
Amidst the refuse leaves, and herbage rotten,  
Lay like the idol of some bygone race,  
Its name and rites forgotten.

## THOMAS HOOD

On every side the aspect was the same,  
All ruined, desolate, forlorn and savage:  
No hand or foot within the precinct came  
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

### II

Oh, very gloomy is the house of woe,  
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,  
With all the dark solemnities which show  
That Death is in the dwelling!

But house of woe, and hearse, and sable pall,  
The narrow home of the departed mortal,  
Ne'er looked so gloomy as that ghostly hall,  
With its deserted portal!

The centipede along the threshold crept,  
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,  
And in its winding-sheet the maggot slept,  
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood;  
The emmets of the steps had old possession,  
And marched in search of their diurnal food  
In undisturbed procession.

## THOMAS HOOD

As undisturbed as the prehensile cell  
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue;  
For never foot upon that threshold fell,  
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

Howbeit, the door I pushed—or so I dreamed—  
Which slowly, slowly gaped—the hinges creaking  
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed  
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dumb within that mansion old,  
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners  
That hung from the corroded walls, and told  
Of former men and manners.

Those tattered flags, that with the opened door  
Seemed the old wave of battle to remember,  
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor  
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out—bird after bird—  
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,  
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard  
Some dying victim utter!

A shriek that echoed from the joisted roof,  
And up the stair, and further still and further,  
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof  
It ceased its tale of murder!



## THOMAS HOOD

Meanwhile the rusty armor rattled round,  
The banner shuddered, and the ragged streamer;  
All things the horrid tenor of the sound  
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball,  
Touched by some impulse occult or mechanic;  
And nameless beetles ran along the wall  
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that from overhead  
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,  
Suddenly turned, and up its slender thread  
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall,  
Assuming features solemn and terrific,  
Hinted some tragedy of that old hall,  
Locked up in hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the doubt,  
Wherefore amongst those flags so dull and livid  
The banner of the BLOODY HAND shone out,  
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal,  
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver,  
And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel  
So ague-like a shiver.

If but a rat had lingered in the house,  
To lure the thought into a social channel!  
But not a rat remained, or tiny mouse,  
To squeak behind the panel.

## THOMAS HOOD

The floor was redolent of mold and must,  
The fungus in the rotten seams had quickened;  
While on the oaken table coats of dust  
Perennially had thickened.

There was so foul a rumor in the air,  
The shadow of a presence so atrocious,  
No human creature could have feasted there,  
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

### III

'Tis hard for human actions to account,  
Whether from reason or from impulse only—  
But some internal prompting bade me mount  
The gloomy stairs and lonely.

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp, and cold,  
With odors as from bones and relics carnal,  
Deprived of rite, and consecrated mould,  
The chapel vault, or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress  
Of every step so many echoes blended,  
The mind, with dark misgivings, feared to guess  
How many feet ascended.

THOMAS HOOD

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,  
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,  
As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,  
With leaves that rankly rotted.

The air was thick—and in the upper gloom  
The bat—or something in its shape—was winging;  
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb,  
The death's-head moth was clinging.

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound  
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly;  
And with a grim significance flits round  
The taper burning blueely.

Such omens in the place there seemed to be,  
At every crooked turn, or on the landing,  
The straining eyeball was prepared to see  
Some apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

Yet no portentous shape the sight amazed;  
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid;  
But from their tarnished frames dark figures gazed,  
And faces spectre-pallid.

Not merely with the mimic life that lies  
Within the compass of art's simulation;  
Their souls were looking through their painted eyes  
With awful speculation.

## THOMAS HOOD

On every lip a speechless horror dwelt;  
On every brow the burthen of affliction;  
The old ancestral spirits knew and felt  
The house's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,  
They might have stirred, or sighed, or wept, or spoken;  
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,  
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,  
Except my steps in solitary clamber,  
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,  
From chamber into chamber.

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art,  
With Scripture history, or classic fable;  
But all had faded, save one ragged part,  
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth  
Had marred the tissue with a partial ravage;  
But undecaying frowned upon the cloth  
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale; the cloud a thing of doubt;  
Some hues were fresh, and some decayed and duller;  
But still the BLOODY HAND shone strangely out  
With vehemence of color!

The BLOODY HAND that with a lurid stain  
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,  
Projected from the casement's painted pane,  
Where all beside was broken.

## THOMAS HOOD

The BLOODY HAND significant of crime,  
That, glaring on the old heraldic banner,  
Had kept its crimson unimpaired by time,  
In such a wondrous manner!

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

The death-watch ticked behind the panelled oak,  
Inexplicable tremors shook the arras,  
And echoes strange and mystical awoke,  
The fancy to embarrass.

Prophetic hints that filled the soul with dread,  
But through one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,  
The while some secret inspiration said,  
That chamber is the ghostly!

Across the door no gossamer festoon  
Swung pendulous—no web—no dusty fringes,  
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon  
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunned the interdicted room,  
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banished,  
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom  
The very midge had vanished.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a bed,  
As if with awful aim direct and certain,  
To show the BLOODY HAND in burning red  
Embroidered on the curtain.

THOMAS HOOD

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt—  
The pillow in its place had slowly rotted;  
The floor alone retained the trace of guilt,  
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence  
With mazy doubles to the grated casement—  
O, what a tale they told of fear intense,  
Of horror and amazement!

What human creature in the dead of night  
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance?  
Had sought the door, the window, in his flight,  
Striving for dear existence?

What shrieking spirit in that bloody room  
Its mortal frame had violently quitted?  
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,  
A ghostly shadow flitted.

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,  
But painted on the air so very dimly,  
It hardly veiled the tapestry at all,  
Or portrait frowning grimly.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

THOMAS HOOD

*Silence*

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,  
There is a silence where no sound may be,  
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,  
Or in wide desert where no life is found,  
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;  
No voice is hushed—no life treads silently,  
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,  
That never spoke, over the idle ground:  
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls  
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,  
Though the dun fox a wild hyæna calls,  
And owls that flit continually between,  
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan—  
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

*To Minerva*

MY temples throb, my pulses boil,  
I'm sick of Song, and Ode, and Ballad:  
So, Thyrsis, take the Midnight Oil,  
And pour it on a lobster salad.

My brain is dull, my sight is foul,  
I cannot write a verse, or read:  
Then, Pallas, take away thine Owl,  
And let us have a lark instead.

THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY

SCOTLAND, 1799—?

*Cleopatra Embarking on the Cydnus*

AFTER A PAINTING BY DERBY

**T**HE barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold:  
Purple the sail, and so perfumèd that  
The winds were love-sick with them: the oars were silver,  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. —Shakespeare.

**F**LUTES in the sunny air,  
And harps in the porphyry halls!  
And a low deep hum—like a people's prayer—  
With its heart-breathed swells and falls!  
And an echo—like the desert's call—  
Flung back to the shouting shores!  
And the river's ripple, heard through all,  
As it plays with the silver oars!  
The sky is a gleam of gold!  
And the amber breezes float,  
Like thoughts to be dreamed of but never told,  
Around the dancing boat!

She has stepped on the burning sand,  
And the thousand tongues are mute;



## THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY

And the Syrian strikes, with a trembling hand,  
The strings of his gilded lute!  
And the Æthiop's heart throbs loud and high,  
Beneath his white symar;  
And the Lybian kneels, as he meets her eye,  
Like the flash of an Eastern star!  
The gales may not be heard,  
Yet the silken streamers quiver,  
And the vessel shoots—like a bright-plumed bird—  
Away, down the golden river!

Away by the lofty mount!  
And away by the lonely shore!  
And away by the gushing of many a fount—  
Where fountains gush no more!  
Oh, for some warning vision there,  
Some voice that should have spoken  
Of climes to be laid waste and bare,  
And glad young spirits broken!  
Of waters dried away,  
And hope and beauty blasted!  
That scenes so fair and hearts so gay  
Should be so early wasted!

A dream of other days!  
That land is a desert now!  
And grief grew up to dim the blaze  
Upon that royal brow!  
The whirlwind's burning wing hath cast  
Blight on the marble plain,  
And sorrow—like the simoom—passed  
O'er Cleopatra's brain!  
For like her fervid clime that bred  
Its self-consuming fires,  
Her heart—like Indian widows—fed

THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY

Its own funereal pyres!  
Not such the song *her* minstrels sing—  
“Live, beauteous, and forever!”  
As the vessel darts, with its purple wing.  
Away down the golden river!

*The Grotto of Egeria*

A GUSH of waters!—faint and sweet and wild,  
Like the far echo of the voice of years,  
The ancient nature, singing to her child  
The self-same hymn that lulled the infant spheres!  
A spell of song not louder than a sigh,  
Yet speaking like a trumpet to the heart,  
And thoughts that lift themselves, triumphingly,  
Over time—where time has triumphed over art—  
As wild-flowers climb its ruins—haunt it still;  
While, still, above the consecrated spot,  
Lifts up its prophet voice the ancient rill,  
And flings its oracles along the grot.  
But, where is she, the lady of the stream,  
And he whose worship was, and is—a dream?

Silent, yet full of voices!—desolate,  
Yet filled with memories, like a broken heart!  
Oh! for a vision like to his who sate  
With thee, and with the moon and stars, apart,  
By the cool fountain, many a livelong even,  
That speaks, unheeded, to the desert, now,  
When vanished clouds had left the air all heaven,  
And all was silent, save the stream and thou,  
Egeria!—solemn thought upon his brows,  
For all his diadem; thy spirit-eyes  
His only homage; and the fitting boughs

## THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY

And birds, alone, between him and the skies!  
Each outward sense expanded to a soul,  
And every feeling tuned into a truth;  
And all the bosom's shattered strings made whole,  
And all its worn-out powers retouched with youth,  
Beneath thy spell, that chastened while it charmed,  
Thy words, that touched the spirit while they taught,  
Thy look, that uttered wisdom while it warmed,  
And molded fancy in the stamp of thought,  
And breathed an atmosphere below, above,  
Light to the soul, and to the senses love!

Beautiful dreams! that haunt the younger earth,  
In poet's pencil or in minstrel's song,  
Like sighs, or rainbows, dying in their birth,  
Perceived a moment, and remembered long!  
But, no!—bright visions!—fables of the heart!  
Not to the past, alone, do ye belong;  
Types for all ages—wove when early art  
To feeling gave a voice—to truth a tongue!  
Oh! what if gods have left the Grecian mount,  
And shrines are voiceless on the classic shore,  
And lone Egeria by the gushing fount  
Waits for her monarch-lover never more—  
Who hath not his Egeria?—some sweet thought,  
Shrouded and shrined within his heart of hearts,  
More closely cherished, and more fondly sought,  
Still, as the daylight of the soul departs;  
The visioned lady of the spring, that wells  
In the green valley of his brighter years,  
Or gentle spirit that for ever dwells,  
And sings of hope, beside the fount of tears.

THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY

In the heart's trance—the calenture of mind  
That haunts the soul-sick mariner of life,  
And paints the fields that he has left behind,  
Like green morganas, on the tempest's strife;  
In the dim hour when memory—whose song  
Is still of buried hope—sings back the dead,  
And perished looks and forms—a phantom-throng—  
With melancholy eyes and soundless tread,  
Like lost Eurydices, from graves, retrack  
The long-deserted chambers of the brain,  
Until the yearning soul looks fondly back  
To clasp them, and they vanish, once again;  
At even—when the fight of youth is done,  
And sorrow—like the “searchers of the slain,”  
Turns up the cold, dead faces, one by one,  
Of prostrate joys and wishes—but in vain!  
And finds that all is lost, and walks around,  
Mid hopes that, each, has perished of its wound;  
Then, pale Egeria! to thy moon-lit cave  
To cool the spirit's fever in thy wave,  
And gather inspiration from thy lyre;  
In solemn musings, when the world is still,  
To woo a love less fleeting to the breast,  
Or lie and dream, beside the prophet-rill  
That resteth never, while it whispers rest;  
Like Numa, cast earth's cares and crowns aside,  
And commune with a spiritual bride!

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

ENGLAND, 1800-1859

MACAULAY was not a poet to the manner born, but made himself a popular writer of superior narrative verse. His standing as an essayist and historian is higher. Nevertheless, his *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842), celebrating the martial prowess of the Romans, enjoyed an enormous popularity and even today have a charm and immediate delight for almost every healthy young mind. His balladry abounds in ringing stanzas, full of impetuous movement and action.

*From "Horatius at the Bridge"*

LARS PORSENA of Clusium  
By the Nine Gods he swore  
That the great house of Tarquin  
Should suffer wrong no more  
By the Nine Gods he swore it,  
And named a trysting day,  
And bade his messengers ride forth,  
East and west and south and north,  
To summon his array.

Fast by the royal standard,  
O'erlooking all the war,  
Lars Porsena of Clusium  
Sat in his ivory car.  
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,  
Prince of the Latian name;  
And by the left false Sextus,  
That wrought the deed of shame.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

But when the face of Sextus  
Was seen among the foes,  
A yell that rent the firmament  
From all the town arose.  
On the house-tops was no woman  
But spat towards him and hissed,  
No child but screamed out curses,  
And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,  
And the Consul's speech was low,  
And darkly looked he at the wall,  
And darkly at the foe.  
"Their van will be upon us  
Before the bridge goes down;  
And if they once may win the bridge  
What hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius,  
The Captain of the Gate:  
"To every man upon this earth  
Death cometh soon or late.  
And how can man die better  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the ashes of his fathers,  
And the temples of his Gods,

"And for the tender mother  
Who dandled him to rest,  
And for the wife who nurses  
His baby at her breast,  
And for the holy maidens  
Who feed the eternal flame,  
To save them from false Sextus  
That wrought the deed of shame?"

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,  
With all the speed ye may;  
I, with two more to help me,  
Will hold the foe in play.  
In yon strait path a thousand  
May well be stopped by three.  
Now who will stand on either hand,  
And keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;  
A Ramnian proud was he:  
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,  
And keep the bridge with thee."  
And out spake strong Herminius;  
Of Titian blood was he:  
"I will abide on thy left side,  
And keep the bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,  
"As thou sayest, so let it be."  
And straight against that great array  
Forth went the dauntless Three.  
For Romans in Rome's quarrel  
Spared neither land nor gold,  
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,  
In the brave days of old.

Then none was for a party;  
Then all were for the State;  
Then the great man helped the poor,  
And poor man loved the great;  
Then lands were fairly portioned;  
Then spoils were fairly sold:  
The Romans were like brothers  
In the brave days of old.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

Now Roman is to Roman  
More hateful than a foe,  
And the Tribunes beard the high,  
And the Fathers grind the low.  
As we wax hot in faction,  
In battle we wax cold;  
Wherefore men fight not as they fought  
In the brave days of old.

Was none who would be foremost  
To lead such dire attack:  
But those behind cried "Forward!"  
And those before cried "Back!"  
And backward now and forward  
Wavers the deep array;  
And on the tossing sea of steel  
To and fro the standards reel;  
And the victorious trumpet-peal  
Dies fitfully away.

Yet one man for one moment  
Stood out before the crowd;  
Well known was he to all the Three,  
And they gave him greeting loud,  
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!  
Now welcome to thy home!  
Why dost thou stay and turn away?  
Here lies the road to Rome."

Thrice looked he at the city;  
Thrice looked he at the dead;  
And thrice came on in fury,  
And thrice turned back in dread:  
And, white with fear and hatred,



THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

Scowled at the narrow way  
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,  
The bravest Tuscans lay.

But meanwhile axe and lever  
Have manfully been plied;  
And now the bridge hangs tottering  
Above the boiling tide.  
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"  
Loud cried the Fathers all.  
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!  
Back, ere the ruin fall!"

Back darted Spurius Lartius;  
Herminius darted back:  
And, as they passed, beneath their feet  
They felt the timbers crack.  
But when they turned their faces,  
And on the farther shore  
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,  
They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder  
Fell every loosened beam,  
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck  
Lay right athwart the stream;  
And a long shout of triumph  
Rose from the walls of Rome,  
As to the highest turret-tops  
Was splashed the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken  
When first he feels the rein,  
The furious river struggled hard,

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

And tossed his tawny mane,  
And burst the curb, and bounded,  
Rejoicing to be free,  
And whirling down, in fierce career,  
Battlement, and plank, and pier,  
Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,  
But constant still in mind,  
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,  
And the broad flood behind.  
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,  
With a smile on his pale face.  
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,  
"Now yield thee to our grace."

Round turned he, as not deigning  
Those craven ranks to see;  
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,  
To Sextus naught spake he;  
But he saw on Palatinus  
The white porch of his home;  
And he spake to the noble river  
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

"O Tiber! father Tiber!  
To whom the Romans pray,  
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,  
Take thou in charge this day!"  
So he spake, and speaking sheathed  
The good sword by his side.  
And with his harness on his back,  
Plunged headlong in the tide.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

No sound of joy or sorrow  
Was heard from either bank;  
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,  
With parted lips and straining eyes,  
Stood gazing where he sank;  
And when above the surges  
They saw his crest appear,  
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry  
And even the ranks of Tuscany  
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;  
"Will not the villain drown?  
But for this stay, ere close of day  
We should have sacked the town."  
"Heaven help him," quoth Lars Porsena,  
"And bring him safe to shore;  
For such a gallant feat of arms  
Was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;  
Now on dry earth he stands;  
Now round him throng the Fathers  
To press his gory hands;  
And now, with shouts and clapping,  
And noise of weeping loud,  
He enters through the River-Gate,  
Borne by the joyous crowd.

When the oldest cask is opened,  
And the largest lamp is lit;  
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,  
And the kid turns on the spit;  
When young and old in circle

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

Around the firebrands close;  
When the girls are weaving baskets,  
And the lads are shaping bows;

When the goodman mends his armor,  
And trims his helmet's plume;  
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily  
Goes flashing through the loom;  
With weeping and with laughter  
Still is the story told,  
How well Horatius kept the bridge  
In the brave days of old.

CHARLES WELLS

ENGLAND, 1800?—1879

*In the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century, Wells wrote "Joseph and His Brethren," a dramatic poem which fell into oblivion until rescued by Swinburne in 1876. I take the following from some of the purple passages:*

Envy

WOULD they be envious, let them be great,  
Envy old cities, ancient neighborhoods,  
Great men of trust and iron-crownèd kings;  
For household envy is a household rat;  
Envy of state a devil of some fear.  
Even in my sleep my mind doth eat strange food,  
Enough to strengthen me against this hate.

CHARLES WELLS

*Love*

**A**TTENDANT. Then, madam, you would say  
That there is nothing in the world but love?

*Phraxanor.* Not quite; but I would say the fiery sun  
Doth not o'ershine the galaxy so far;  
Nor doth a torch within a jewelled mine  
Amaze the eye beyond this diamond here  
More than the ruddy offices of love  
Do glow before the common steps of life.

WILLIAM BARNES

ENGLAND, 1801-1886

*Mater Dolorosa*

**I**'D a dream to-night  
As I fell asleep,  
Oh, the touching sight  
Makes me still to weep:  
Of my little lad,  
Gone to leave me sad,  
Ay, the child I had,  
But was not to keep.

As in Heaven high,  
I my child did seek,  
There in train came by  
Children fair and meek,  
Each in lily white,  
With a lamp alight;  
Each was clear to sight,  
But they did not speak.

WILLIAM BARNES

Then, a little sad,  
Came my child in turn,  
But the lamp he had,  
Oh, it did not burn!  
He, to clear my doubt,  
Said, half turned about,  
"Your tears put it out;  
Mother, never mourn."

*The Motherless Child*

THE zun'd a-zet back t'other night,  
But in the zettèn pleäce  
The clouds a-reddened by his light,  
Still glowed avore my feäce.  
An' I've a-lost my Meäry's smile,  
I thought; but still I have her chile  
Zoo like her, that my eyes can treäce  
The mother's in her daughter's feäce.  
O little feäce so near to me,  
An' like thy mother's gone; why need I zay,  
Sweet night cloud, wi' the glow o' my lost day,  
Thy looks be always dear to me!  
The zun'd a-zet another night;  
But, by the moon on high,  
He still did zend us back his light  
Below a cwolder sky.  
My Meäry's in a better land  
I thought, but still her chile's at hand,  
An in her chile she'll zend me on  
Her love, though she herself's a-gone.  
O little chile so near to me,  
An like thy mother gone; why need I zay,  
Sweet moon, the messenger vrom my lost day,  
Thy looks be always dear to me.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

ENGLAND, 1801-1890

*Lead, Kindly Light*

**L**EAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
    Lead Thou me on;  
The night is dark, and I am far from home,  
    Lead Thou me on.  
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene: one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou  
    Shouldst lead me on;  
I loved to choose and see my path, but now  
    Lead Thou me on.  
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,  
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
    Will lead me on,  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
    The night is gone,  
And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

LETITIA E. LANDON

ENGLAND, 1802-1838

HERE is a name that once was a toast on every tongue, yet it is now almost forgotten. L. E. L. frequently had the weakness of indulging in sentimentality—the overdoing of sentiment. But she sometimes rises to a more restrained and artistic expression. We feel this in her earnest outcry against the slavery of the little children in the factories of mid-Victorian England—an outcry that even at this late hour is sadly needed in many sections of our own industrial America. How persistent in this world are the evils that prosper the pockets of a few!

*From "The Factory"*

*'Tis an accursed thing.*

THERE rests a shade above yon town,  
A dark, funereal shroud:  
'Tis not the tempest hurrying down,  
'Tis not a summer cloud.

The smoke that rises on the air  
Is as a type and sign;  
A shadow flung by the despair  
Within those streets of thine. . .

There rises on the morning wind  
A low, appealing cry,  
A thousand children are resigned  
To sicken and to die!



LETITIA E. LANDON

We read of Moloch's sacrifice,  
We sicken at the name,  
And seem to hear the infant cries—  
And yet we cause the same—

And worse: 'twas but a moment's pain  
The heathen altar gave,  
But we give years—our idol, Gain,  
Demands a living grave!

Look on yon child, it droops the head,  
Its knees are bowed with pain;  
It mutters from its wretched bed,  
"Oh, let me sleep again!"

Alas! 'tis time, the mother's eyes  
Turn mournfully away;  
Alas! 'tis time, the child must rise,  
And yet it is not day.

The lantern's lit—she hurries forth,  
The spare cloak's scanty fold,  
Scarce screens her from the snowy north,  
The child is pale and cold.

And wearily the little hands  
Their task accustomed ply;  
While daily, some 'mid those pale bands  
Droop, sicken, pine and die.

Good God! to think upon a child  
That has no childish days,  
No careless play, no frolics wild,  
No words of prayer and praise!

LETITIA E. LANDON

Man from the cradle—'tis too soon  
To earn their daily bread.  
And heap the heat and toil of noon  
Upon an infant's head.

To labor ere their strength be come,  
Or starve—is such the doom  
That makes of many an English home  
One long and living tomb?

Is there no pity from above—  
No mercy in those skies?  
Hath then the heart of man no love,  
To spare such sacrifice?

O England! though thy tribute waves  
Proclaim thee great and free,  
While those small children pine like slaves,  
There is a curse on thee!

*Necessity*

**I**N the ancestral presence of the dead  
Sits a lone power—a veil upon the head,  
Stern with the terror of an unseen dread.

It sitteth cold, immutable and still,  
Girt with eternal consciousness of ill,  
And strong and silent as its own dark will.

We are the victims of its iron rule,  
The warm and beating human heart its tool;  
And man, immortal, godlike, but its fool.

We know not of its presence, though its power  
Be on the gradual round of every hour,  
Now flinging down an empire, now a flower.

LETITIA E. LANDON

And all things small and careless are its own,  
Unwittingly the seed minute is sown,  
The tree of evil out of it is grown.

At times we see and struggle with our chain,  
And dream that somewhat we are freed, in vain;  
The mighty fetters close on us again.

We mock our actual strength with lofty thought,  
And towers that look into the heavens are wrought,  
But after all our toil the task is naught.

Down comes the stately fabric, and the sands  
Are scattered with the work of myriad hands,  
High o'er whose pride the fragil wild-flower stands.

Such are the wreck of nations and of kings,  
Far in the desert, where the palm-tree springs;  
'Tis the same story in all meaner things.

The heart builds up its hopes, though not addressed  
To meet the sunset glories of the west,  
But garnered in some still, sweet-singing nest.

But the dark power is on its noiseless way,  
The song is silent so sweet yesterday  
And not a green leaf lingers on the spray.

We mock ourselves with freedom and with hope,  
The while our feet glide down life's faithless slope;  
One has no strength, the other has no scope.

So we are flung on time's tumultuous wave,  
Forced there to struggle, but denied to save,  
Till the stern tide ebbs—and there is the grave.

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED  
ENGLAND, 1802-1839

*The Vicar*

SOME years ago, ere time and taste  
Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,  
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,  
And roads as little known as scurvy,  
The man who lost his way, between  
St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,  
Was always shown across the green,  
And guided to the Parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lissom lath;  
Fair Margaret, in her tidy kirtle,  
Led the lorn traveller up the path,  
Through clean-clipt rows of box and myrtle;  
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,  
Upon the parlor steps collected,  
Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say—  
“Our master knows you—you're expected.”

Uprose the Reverend Dr. Brown,  
Uprose the Doctor's winsome marrow;  
The lady laid her knitting down,  
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow;  
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,  
Pundit or Papist, saint or sinner,  
He found a stable for his steed,  
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

## WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

If, when he reached his journey's end,  
And warmed himself in Court or College,  
He had not gained an honest friend  
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge;  
If he departed as he came,  
With no new light on love or liquor—  
Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,  
And not the Vicarage, nor the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream, which runs  
With rapid change from rocks to roses:  
It slipped from politics to puns,  
It passed from Mahomet to Moses;  
Beginning with the laws which keep  
The planets in their radiant courses,  
And ending with some precept deep  
For dressing eels, or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd and sound Divine,  
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;  
And when, by dint of page and line,  
He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,  
The Baptist found him far too deep;  
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow;  
And the lean Levite went to sleep,  
And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.

His sermon never said or showed  
That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,  
Without refreshment on the road  
From Jerome, or from Athanasius:  
And sure a righteous zeal inspired  
The hand and head that penned and planned them,  
For all who understood admired,  
And some who did not understand them.

## WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,  
Small treatises, and smaller verses,  
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,  
And hints to noble Lords—and nurses;  
True histories of last year's ghost,  
Lines to a ringlet, or a turban,  
And trifles for the Morning Post,  
And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair,  
Although he had a knack of joking;  
He did not make himself a bear,  
Although he had a taste for smoking;  
And when religious sects ran mad,  
He held, in spite of all his learning,  
That if a man's belief is bad,  
It will not be improved by burning.

And he was kind, and loved to sit  
In the low hut or garnished cottage,  
And praise the farmer's homely wit,  
And share the widow's homelier pottage!  
At his approach complaint grew mild;  
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,  
The clammy lips of fever smiled  
The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me  
Of Julius Cæsar, or of Venus;  
From him I learnt the rule of three,  
Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and *Quæe genus*:  
I used to singe his powdered wig,  
To steal the staff he put such trust in,  
And make the puppy dance a jig,  
When he began to quote Augustine.

## WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

Alack the change! in vain I look  
For haunts in which my boyhood trifled—  
The level lawn, the trickling brook,  
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled:  
The church is larger than before;  
You reach it by a carriage entry;  
It holds three hundred people more,  
And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat: you'll hear  
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,  
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,  
Whose phrase is very Ciceronian.  
Where is the old man laid? Look down,  
And construe on the slab before you,  
*Hic jacet GVLIELMVS BROWN,*  
*Vir nullâ non donandus lauru.*

## JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

IRELAND, 1803-1849

IT would not be fair to judge Mangan by anything but his few supreme achievements; to exalt unduly his lesser achievements is to endanger the just fame of the poet at his loftiest and loveliest height. He is at his best when ancient Ireland speaks to him of her glories, her sorrows, her hopes. Above all, he is the author of that imperishable poem of inspired patriotism, *Dark Rosaleen*.

Mangan states that this impassioned song (entitled, in the Irish original, *Roisin Dubh*, or The Black-Haired Little Rose) was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by one of the poets of the celebrated Tyrconnellian chieftain, Hugh the Red O'Donnell. It purports to be an allegorical address from Hugh to Ireland on the subject of his love and struggles for her, and his resolve to raise

## JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

her again to the glorious position she held as a nation before the irruption of Saxon and Norman spoilers. Granting its derivation, this great poem is as original with Mangan as the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is with Edward Fitzgerald. Mangan not infrequently rises to a high level of poetic power; and had his strength of character been equal to his poetic gift, his supremacy among Irish poets would not be challenged. His career was a sad and checkered one, misery driving him to drink and drugs. His life was spent in Dublin, where he died. He belongs with Chatterton and Verlaine and the other ill-starred sons of genius.

### *Dark Rosaleen*

O MY Dark Rosaleen,  
Do not sigh, do not weep!  
The priests are on the ocean green,  
They march along the deep.  
There's wine from the royal Pope,  
Upon the ocean green;  
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My own Rosaleen!  
Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,  
Shall give you health, and help, and hope,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

Over hills, and through dales,  
Have I roamed for your sake;  
All yesterday I sailed with sails  
On river and on lake.  
'The Erne, at its highest flood,  
I dashed across unseen,  
For there was lightning in my blood,



JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

My Dark Rosaleen!  
My own Rosaleen!  
O, there was lightning in my blood,  
Red lightning lightened through my blood,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

All day long, in unrest,  
To and fro, do I move.  
The very soul within my breast  
Is wasted for you, Love!  
The heart in my bosom faints  
To think of you, my Queen,  
My life of life, my saint of saints,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My own Rosaleen!  
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,  
My Life, my Love, my Saint of saints,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

Woe and pain, pain and woe,  
Are my lot, night and noon,  
To see your bright face clouded so,  
Like to the mournful moon.  
But yet will I rear your throne  
Again in golden sheen;  
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My own Rosaleen!  
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,  
'Tis you shall reign, and reign alone,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

Over dews, over sands,  
Will I fly, for your weal:  
Your holy delicate white hands

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

Shall girdle me with steel.  
At home, in your emerald bowers,  
From morning's dawn till e'en,  
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My fond Rosaleen!  
You'll think of me through daylight hours,  
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

I could scale the blue air,  
I could plough the high hills,  
O, I could kneel all night in prayer,  
To heal your many ills!  
And one beamy smile from you  
Would float like light between  
My toils and me, my own, my true,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My fond Rosaleen!  
Would give me life and soul anew,  
A second life, a soul anew,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

O, the Erne shall run red,  
With redundance of blood,  
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,  
And flames wrap hill and wood,  
And gun-peal and slogan-cry  
Wake many a glen serene,  
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My own Rosaleen!  
The Judgement Hour must first be nigh,  
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,  
My Dark Rosaleen!

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

*From "Gone in the Wind"*

*In his "Treasury of Irish Poetry," Lionel Johnson credits Mangan with the authorship of this threnody, although Mangan himself described it as a translation from the German of Rückert, and it has usually been printed as such. "It has, however, no German original," says Johnson. "The phrase 'gone in the wind' is practically all that it possesses in common with a certain poem of Rückert's, and there the phrase is used differently."*

SOLOMON, where is thy throne? It is gone in the  
wind.

Babylon, where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.

Like the swift shadows of noon, like the dreams of the  
blind,

Vanish the glories and pomps of the earth in the wind.

Man, canst thou build upon aught in the pride of thy  
mind?

Wisdom will teach thee that nothing can tarry behind:  
Though there be thousand bright actions embalmed and  
enshrined,

Myriads and millions of brighter are snow in the wind.

Solomon, where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.

Babylon, where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.

Happy in death are they only whose hearts have con-  
signed

All earth's affections and longings and cares to the  
wind.

Pity thou, reader, the madness of poor humankind  
Raving of knowledge; (and Satan so busy to blind!)  
Raving of glory, like me; for the garlands I bind,  
Garlands of song, are but gathered, and strewn in the  
wind.

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

Solomon, where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.  
Babylon, where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.  
I, Abul-Namez, must rest; for my fire is declined,  
And I hear voices from Hades, like bells on the wind.

*The Nameless One*

**R**OLL forth, my song, like the rushing river,  
That sweeps along to the mighty sea:  
God will inspire me while I deliver  
My soul of thee!

Tell thou the world, when my bones lie whitening  
Amid the last homes of youth and eld,  
That once there was one whose veins ran lightning  
No eye beheld.

Tell how his boyhood was one drear night-hour,  
How shone for him, through his grief and gloom,  
No star of all heaven sends to light our  
Path to the tomb.

Roll on, my song, and to after ages  
Tell how, disdaining all earth can give:  
He would have taught men, from wisdom's pages,  
The way to live.

And tell how trampled, derided, hated,  
And worn by weakness, disease, and wrong,  
He fled for shelter to God, who mated  
His soul with song—

With song which alway, sublime or vapid,  
Flowed like a rill in the morning-beam,  
Perchance not deep, but intense and rapid—  
A mountain stream.

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

Tell how this Nameless, condemned for years long  
To herd with demons from hell beneath,  
Saw things that made him, with groans and tears, long  
For even death.

Go on to tell how, with genius wasted,  
Betrayed in friendship, befooled in love,  
With spirit shipwrecked, and young hopes blasted,  
He still, still strove;

Till spent with toil, dreeing death for others,  
And some whose hands should have wrought for him  
(If children live not for sires and mothers)  
His mind grew dim;

And he fell far through that pit abysmal,  
The gulf and grave of Maginn and Burns,  
And pawned his soul for the devil's dismal  
Stock of returns;

But yet redeemed it in days of darkness,  
And shapes and signs of the final wrath,  
When death, in hideous and ghastly starkness,  
Stood on his path.

And tell how now, amid wreck and sorrow,  
And want, and sickness, and houseless nights,  
He bides in calmness the silent morrow,  
That no ray lights.

And lives he still, then? Yes! Old and hoary  
At thirty-nine, from despair and woe,  
He lives, enduring what future story  
Will never know.

## JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

Him grant a grave to, ye pitying noble,  
Deep in your bosoms: there let him dwell!  
He, too, had tears for all souls in trouble  
Here, and in hell.

## THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

ENGLAND, 1803-1849

BEDDOES was one of the wild dream-driven spirits touched by the madness of the Muse. His masterpiece is *Death's Jest Book*, a tragedy of the same order as John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfy*. The lyrics in the *Jest Book* and elsewhere are more brilliant than the blank verse. They sometimes recall the Shelleyan and the Shakespearean lyrics; and some of them are touched with a strange mingling of comic and sepulchral light.

### *Dream-Pedlary*

IF there were dreams to sell,  
What would you buy?  
Some cost a passing bell;  
Some a light sigh,  
That shakes from Life's fresh crown  
Only a rose-leaf down.  
If there were dreams to sell,  
Merry and sad to tell,  
And the crier rang the bell,  
What would you buy?

A cottage lone and still,  
With bowers nigh,  
Shadowy, my woes to still,  
Until I die.

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

Such pearl from Life's fresh crown  
Fain would I shake me down.  
Were dreams to have at will,  
This would best heal my ill,  
    This would I buy.

*Wolfram's Song*

FROM "DEATH'S JEST BOOK," ACT V.

OLD ADAM, the carrion crow,  
    The old crow of Cairo;  
He sat in the shower, and let it flow  
    Under his tail and over his crest;  
        And through every feather  
        Leaked the wet weather;  
And the bough swung under his nest;  
For his beak it was heavy with marrow.  
    Is that the wind dying? O no;  
    It's only two devils, that blow  
    Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,  
        In the ghosts' moonshine.

Ho! Eva, my grey carrion wife,  
    When we have supped on kings' marrow,  
Where shall we drink and make merry our life?  
    Our nest it is Queen Cleopatra's skull,  
        'Tis cloven and cracked,  
        And battered and hacked,  
But with tears of blue eyes it is full:  
Let us drink then, my raven of Cairo.  
    Is that the wind dying? O no;  
    It is only two devils, that blow  
    Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,  
        In the ghosts' moonshine.

## RICHARD HENRY, OR HENGIST, HORNE

ENGLAND, 1803-1884

HORNE was great as a poet and eccentric as a man. After a youth of adventure, partly in the Mexican naval service, he returned to England and began, in 1828, a highly spectacular literary career in which the publication of *Orion, an Epic Poem* (1843) marked the climax. I agree with Poe, other critics to the contrary, that *Orion* is a very noble poem.

### *From "Orion," an Epic Poem*

*"Orion" is based upon the various loves of this fabled giant hunter, his loves for the goddess Artemis, and for the mortal maidens, Merope and Eos. Purified after labors and suffering, he is at last made immortal, and becomes a constellation.*

*I agree with Poe when he says: "'Orion' will be admitted by every man of genius, to be one of the noblest, if not the very noblest, poetical work of the age. Its defects are trivial and conventional—its beauties intrinsic and supreme." And let me add that in the quoted passages that follow, Horne rises to a height that is not surpassed even by Milton, singing of darkness and the stars.*

*Note now how swiftly—in a few brief strokes—the following picture is projected before us:*

THE scene in front two sloping mountain sides  
Displayed; in shadow one and one in light.  
The loftiest on its summit now sustained  
The sun-beams, raying like a mighty wheel  
Half seen, which left the forward surface dark  
In its full breadth of shade; the coming sun



## RICHARD HENRY HORNE

Hidden as yet behind; the other mount,  
Slanting transverse, swept with an eastward face,  
Catching the golden light. Now while the peal  
Of the ascending chase told that the rout  
Still midway rent the thickets, suddenly  
Along the broad and sunny slope appeared  
The shadow of a stag that fled across  
Followed by a Giant's shadow with a spear.

*And now we come upon Orion's own description of a  
palace built by him for Vulcan. Note the lighted thunders  
with which the passages close:*

But, ere a shadow-hunter I became—  
A dreamer of strange dreams by day and night—  
For him I built a palace underground,  
Of iron, black and rough as his own hands.  
Deep in the groaning, disembowled earth,  
The tower-broad pillars and huge stanchions,  
And slant supporting wedges I set up,  
Aided by the Cyclops who obeyed my voice,  
Which through the metal fabric rang and pealed  
In orders echoing far, like thunder-dreams.  
With arches, galleries and domes all carved—  
So that great figures started from the roof  
And loftly coignes, or sat and downward gazed  
On those who stood below and gazed above—  
I filled it; in the center framed a hall:  
Central in that, a throne; and for the light,  
Forged mighty hammers that should rise and fall  
On slanted rocks of granite and of flint,  
Worked by a torrent, for whose passage down  
A chasm I hewed. And here the God could take,  
Midst showery sparks and swathes of broad gold fire,  
His lone repose, lulled by the sounds he loved:

RICHARD HENRY HORNE

Or, casting back the hammer-heads till they choked  
The water's course, enjoy, if so he wished,  
Midnight tremendous, silence, and iron sleep.

*And now we come to the hour when Orion, his brethren  
all dead, is engaged alone in driving the beasts out of  
Chios. He builds two immense, wide-placed, walls nar-  
rowing like a funnel to the sea. He drives the flying herds  
of animals seaward between these walls. Observe how  
clear are the details—how vividly picturesque are the  
incidents. This is master-work:*

Two days remain. Orion, in each hand  
Waving a torch, his course at night began,  
Through wildest haunts and lairs of savage beasts.  
With long-drawn howl, before him trooped the wolves—  
The panthers, terror-stricken, and the bears  
With wonder and gruff rage; from desolate crags,  
Leering hyenas, griffin, hippogrif,  
Skulked, or sprang madly, as the tossing brands  
Flashed through the midnight nooks and hollows cold.  
Sudden as fire from flint; o'er crashing thickets,  
With crouched head and curled fangs, dashed the wild  
boar,  
Gnashing forth on with reckless impulses,  
While the clear-purposed fox crept closely down  
Into the underwood, to let the storm,  
Whate'er its cause, pass over. Through dark fens,  
Marshes, green rushy swamps and margins reedy,  
Orion held his way—and rolling shapes  
Of serpent and of dragon moved before him  
With high-reared crests, swan-like yet terrible,  
And often looking back with gem-like eyes.

## RICHARD HENRY HORNE

All night Orion urged his rapid course  
In the vexed rear of the swift-droving din,  
And when the dawn had peered, the monsters all  
Were hemmed in barriers. These he now o'erheaped  
With fuel through the day, and when again  
Night darkened, and the sea a gulf-like voice  
Sent forth, the barriers at all points he fired,  
Mid prayers to Hephaestos and his Ocean-sire.

Soon as the flames had eaten out a gap  
In the great barrier fronting the ravine  
That ran down to the sea, Orion grasped  
Two blazing boughs; one high in air he raised,  
The other, with its roaring foliage trailed  
Behind him as he sped. Onward the droves  
Of frantic creatures with one impulse rolled  
Before this night-devouring thing of flames,  
With multitudinous voice and downward sweep  
Into the sea, which now first knew a tide,  
And, ere they made one effort to regain  
The shore, had caught them in its flowing arms,  
And bore them past all hope. The living mass,  
Dark heaving o'er the waves resistlessly,  
At length, in distance, seemed a circle small,  
Midst which one creature in the center rose,  
Conspicuous in the long, red quivering gleams  
That from the dying brands streamed o'er the waves.  
It was the oldest dragon of the fens,  
Whose forty flag-wings and horn-crested head  
O'er crags and marshes regal sway had held;  
And now he rose up, like an embodied curse,  
From all the doomed, fast sinking—some just sunk—  
Looked landward o'er the sea, and flapped his vans,  
Until Poseidon drew them whirling down.

ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER

ENGLAND, 1804-1875

*And Shall Trelawny Die?*

A GOOD sword and a trusty hand!  
A merry heart and true!  
King James's men shall understand  
What Cornish lads can do.

And have they fixed the where and when?  
And shall Trelawny die?  
Here's twenty thousand Cornish men  
Will know the reason why!

Out spake their captain brave and bold,  
A merry wight was he:  
"If London Tower were Michael's hold,  
We'll set Trelawny free!

"We'll cross the Tamar, land to land,  
The Severn is no stay,  
With 'one and all', and hand in hand,  
And who shall bid us nay?

"And when we come to London Wall,  
A pleasant sight to view,  
Come forth! come forth, ye cowards all,  
Here's men as good as you.

ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER

"Trelawny he's in keep and hold,  
Trelawny he may die;  
But here's twenty thousand Cornish bold  
Will know the reason why!"

FRANCIS MAHONY

IRELAND, 1805-1866

*The Bells of Shandon*

WITH deep affection,  
And recollection,  
I often think of  
Those Shandon bells,  
Whose sounds so wild would,  
In the days of childhood,  
Fling around my cradle  
Their magic spells.  
On this I ponder  
Where'er I wander,  
And thus grow fonder,  
Sweet Cork, of thee;  
With thy bells of Shandon,  
That sound so grand on  
The pleasant waters  
Of the River Lee.

I've heard bells chiming  
Full many a clime in,  
Tolling sublime in  
Cathedral shrine,  
While at a glib rate  
Brass tongues would vibrate—

FRANCIS MAHONY

But all their music  
    Spoke naught like thine;  
For memory, dwelling  
On each proud swelling  
Of the belfry knelling  
    Its bold notes free,  
Made the bells of Shandon  
Sound far more grand on  
The pleasant waters  
    Of the River Lee.

I've heard bells tolling  
Old Adrian's Mole in,  
Their thunder rolling  
    From the Vatican,  
And cymbals glorious  
Swinging uproarious  
In the gorgeous turrets  
    Of Notre Dame;  
But thy sounds were sweeter  
Than the dome of Peter  
Flings o'er the Tiber,  
    Pealing solemnly—  
O, the bells of Shandon  
Sound far more grand on  
The pleasant waters  
    Of the River Lee.

There's a bell in Moscow,  
While on tower and kiosk O!  
In Saint Sophia  
    The Turkman gets,  
And loud in air  
Calls men to prayer

## FRANCIS MAHONY

From the tapering summits  
Of tall minarets.  
Such empty phantom  
I freely grant them;  
But there's an anthem  
More dear to me—  
'Tis the bells of Shandon,  
That sound so grand on  
The pleasant waters  
Of the River Lee.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

ENGLAND, 1806-1861

THE appearance, in 1841, of *The Cry of the Children* gave a great impetus to the growing fame of Elizabeth Barrett, who was to become the wife of Robert Browning five years later. In 1844 she published two volumes of poems, which comprised *The Drama of Exile, Vision of Poets* and *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*. After her marriage appeared the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*—the history of her own love-story, thinly disguised by its title. *Aurora Leigh*, her largest and perhaps the most popular of her longer poems, appeared in 1856.

No more impassioned soul ever found expression in rhythmical speech than Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and there is nothing finer in her poetry than the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Poe found her *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* combining "the fiercest passion with the most ethereal fancy", adding, however, that "we are forced to admit her poem is a palpable imitation of Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, which it surpasses in plot or rather in thesis, as much as it falls below it in artistic management and in a certain calm energy—lustrous and indomitable—such as we might imagine in a broad river of molten gold." In 1845, Poe

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wrote: "That Miss Barrett [Elizabeth Barrett Browning] has done more, in poetry, than any woman, living or dead, will scarcely be questioned—that she has surpassed all her poetical contemporaries of either sex (with a single exception) is our deliberate opinion." This seems to me to be a just judgment. I do not believe that the whole world of poetry contains a more powerful passage than the following from her *Drama of Exile*:

"On a mountain peak  
Half sheathed in primal woods and glittering  
*In spasms of awful sunshine*, at that hour  
A Lion couched, part raised upon his paws  
With his calm massive face turned full on mine  
*And his mane listening*. When the ended curse  
Left silence in the world, right suddenly  
He sprang up rampant, and stood straight and stiff,  
*As if the new reality of Death*  
*Were dashed against his eyes*, and roared so fierce—  
(*Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat*  
*Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear*)  
And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills  
Such fast keen *echoes crumbling down the vales*  
*To distant silence*—that the forest beasts,  
One after one, did mutter a response  
In savage and in sorrowful complaint  
*Which trailed along the gorges.*"

We have here a picturesque vigor in the great lines, a vigor that makes us think of Homer in his highest moments.



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*Sonnets from the Portuguese*

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:  
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,  
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,  
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung

A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,  
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;  
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,  
"Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death," I said. But,  
there,  
The silver answer rang—"Not Death, but Love."

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand  
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore  
Alone upon the threshold of my door  
Of individual life, I shall command  
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand  
Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
Without the sense of that which I forbore—  
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land

Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine  
With pulses that beat double. What I do  
And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue  
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,  
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

If thou must love me, let it be for nought  
Except for Love's safe only. Do not say  
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way  
Of speaking gently, for a trick of thought  
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought  
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—  
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may  
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,

May be unwrought so. Neither love me for  
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry—  
A creature might forget to weep, who bore  
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!  
But love me for Love's sake, that evermore  
Thou mayst love on, through Love's eternity.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right:  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*Nothing Small*

**T**HERE'S nothing great  
Nor small," has said a poet of our day,  
And truly I reiterate. Nothing's small!  
No lily-muffled hum of summer bee  
But finds some coupling with the spinning stars:  
No pebble at your foot but proves a sphere;  
No chaffinch, but implies the cherubim.  
Ay, glancing on my own thin-veinèd wrist,  
In such a little tremor of the blood  
The whole strong clamor of a vehement soul  
Doth utter itself distinct. Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,  
And daub their natural faces unaware  
More and more from the first similitude.

*Traveling South toward Italy*

FROM "AURORA LEIGH"

**I** FELT the wind soft from the land of souls;  
The old miraculous mountains heaved in sight,  
One straining past another along the shore,  
The way of grand dull Odyssean ghosts,  
Athirst to drink the cool blue wine of seas  
And stare on voyages. Peak pushing peak  
They stood: I watched, beyond that Tyrian belt  
Of intense sea betwixt them and the ship,  
Down all their sides the misty olive-woods  
Dissolving in the weak congenial moon,  
And still disclosing some brown convent-tower

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That seems as if it grew from some brown rock,  
Or many a little lighted village, dropped  
Like a fallen star upon so high a point,  
You wonder what can keep it in its place  
From sliding headlong with the waterfalls  
Which powder all the myrtle and orange groves  
With spray of silver. Thus my Italy  
Was stealing on us. Genoa broke with day,  
The Doria's long pale palace striking out,  
From green hills in advance of the white town,  
A marble finger dominant to ships  
Seen glimmering through the uncertain gray of dawn.

*Man*

FROM "AURORA LEIGH"

THE cygnet finds the water, but the **man**  
Is born in ignorance of his element  
And feels out blind at first, disorganized  
By sin i' the blood—his spirit-insight dulled  
And crossed by his sensations. Presently  
He feels it quicken in the dark sometimes,  
When, mark, be reverent, be obedient,  
For such dumb motions of imperfect life  
Are oracles of vital Deity  
Attesting the Hereafter. Let who says  
"The soul's a clean white paper", rather say,  
A palimpsest, a prophet's holograph  
Defiled, erased and covered by a monk's—  
The apocalypse, by a Longus! poring on  
Which obscene text, we may discern perhaps  
Some fair, fine trace of what was written once,  
Some upstroke of an alpha and omega  
Expressing the old scripture.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*The Poets*

FROM "LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP"

THERE, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud  
the poems  
Made to Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various of  
our own;  
Read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtle inter-  
flowings  
Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book—the leaf  
is folded down!  
Or at times a modern volume—Wordsworth's solemn-  
thoughted idyl,  
Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie—  
Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut  
deep down the middle,  
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined  
humanity.

*Hiram Powers's Greek Slave*

THEY say Ideal beauty cannot enter  
The house of anguish. On the threshold stands  
An alien Image with enshackled hands,  
Called the Greek Slave! as if the artist meant her  
(That passionless perfection which he lent her,  
Shadowed not darkened where the sill expands)  
To, so, confront man's crimes in different lands  
With man's ideal sense. Pierce to the centre,  
Art's fiery finger!—and break up ere long  
The serfdom of this world! appeal, fair stone,

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

From God's pure heights of beauty against man's  
wrong!

Catch up in thy divine face, not alone  
East griefs but west—and strike and shame the strong,  
By thunders of white silence, overthrown.

*A Musical Instrument*

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,  
Down in the reeds by the river?  
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,  
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,  
And breaking the golden lilies afloat  
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,  
From the deep cool bed of the river;  
The limpid water turbidly ran,  
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,  
And the dragon-fly had fled away,  
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,  
While turbidly flowed the river;  
And hacked and hewed as a great god can  
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,  
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed  
To prove it fresh from the river.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

He cut it short, did the great god Pan  
    (How tall it stood in the river!)  
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,  
Steadily from the outside ring,  
And notched the poor dry empty thing  
    In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan  
    (Laughed while he sat by the river)  
"The only way, since gods began  
To make sweet music, they could succeed."  
Then dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,  
    He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!  
    Piercing sweet by the river!  
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!  
The sun on the hill forgot to die,  
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly  
    Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,  
    To laugh as he sits by the river,  
Making a poet out of a man:  
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain—  
For the reed which grows nevermore again  
    As a reed with the reeds of the river.

### *The Cry of the Children*

*Poe says of the following: "This poem is full of a nervous unflinching energy, horror sublime in its simplicity, of which a far greater than Dante might be proud." The poem was suggested by the report of a commission ap-*

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*pointed by Parliament to investigate the employment of young children in England, when the employers boasted that now there was "scarce a child of seven but could earn its own living." Parliament was unable to cope with this tragic devastation of childhood. Whereupon this frail woman, then Elizabeth Barrett, in her sick room, read the investigation reports, became incandescent with holy anger, and wrote the poem that threw an awakening light upon the darkened mind of England, and changed the fate of a generation of children.*

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years?  
They are leaning their young heads against their  
mothers,  
And that cannot stop their tears.  
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,  
The young birds are chirping in the nest,  
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,  
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—  
But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
They are weeping bitterly!  
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in their sorrow  
Why their tears are falling so?  
The old man may weep for his to-morrow  
Which is lost in Long Ago;  
The old tree is leafless in the forest,  
The old year is ending in the frost,  
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,  
The old hope is hardest to be lost;  
But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
Do you ask them why they stand



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,  
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,  
And their looks are sad to see,  
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses  
Down the cheeks of infancy:  
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,  
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak:  
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—  
Our grave-rest is very far to seek:  
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,  
For the outside earth is cold,  
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,  
And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the children, "it may happen  
That we die before our time:  
Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen  
Like a snowball in the rime.  
We looked into the pit prepared to take her:  
Was no room for any work in the close clay!  
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,  
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'  
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,  
With your ear down, little Alice never cries;  
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,  
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes;  
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in  
The shroud by the kirk-chime.  
It is good when it happens," say the children,  
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking  
Death in life, as best to have:

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,  
With a cerement from the grave.  
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,  
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do:  
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,  
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!  
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows  
Like our weeds a-near the mine?  
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,  
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,  
And we cannot run or leap;  
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely  
To drop down in them and sleep.  
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,  
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;  
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,  
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.  
For all day we drag our burden tiring  
Through the coal-dark, underground;  
Or all day we drive the wheels of iron  
In the factories, round and round.

"For all day the wheels are droning, turning;  
Their wind comes in our faces,  
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,  
And the walls turn in their places:  
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,  
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,  
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,  
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.  
And all day the iron wheels are droning,  
And sometimes we could pray,

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning)  
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing  
For a moment, mouth to mouth!  
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing  
Of their tender human youth!  
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion  
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals;  
Let them prove their living souls against the notion  
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!  
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,  
Grinding life down from its mark;  
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,  
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,  
To look up to Him and pray;  
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,  
Will bless them another day.  
They answer, "Who is God, that He should hear us,  
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?  
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us  
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.  
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)  
Strangers speaking at the door:  
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,  
Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,  
And at midnight's hour of harm,  
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,  
We say softly for a charm.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

We know no other words except 'Our Father,'  
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,  
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,  
And hold both within His right hand which is strong,  
'Our Father!' If He heard us He would surely  
(For they call Him good and mild)  
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,  
'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But no!" say the children, weeping faster,  
"He is speechless as a stone;  
And they tell us, of His image is the master,  
Who commands us to work on.  
Go to!" say the children—"up in heaven,  
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.  
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving:  
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."  
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,  
O my brothers, what ye preach?  
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving,  
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!  
They are weary ere they run:  
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory  
Which is brighter than the sun.  
They know the grief of man without its wisdom;  
They sink in man's despair without its calm;  
Are slaves without the liberty in Christdom,  
Are martyrs by the pang without the palm:  
Are worn as if with age, yet unretreivably  
The harvest of its memories cannot reap—  
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.  
Let them weep! let them weep!

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,  
And their look is dread to see,  
For they 'mind you of their angels in high places,  
With eyes turned on Deity.  
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,  
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart—  
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,  
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?  
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,  
And your purple shows your path!  
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper  
Than the strong man in his wrath."

## EDWARD FITZGERALD

ENGLAND, 1809-1883

**F**ITZGERALD, whose immortal achievement is the so-called translation of *The Rubáiyat of Omar Kháyyám*, was an eccentric man of genius, who took more pains to avoid fame than others do to seek it. He loved with a constant and ardent affection what is great, noble and heroic. His friends included Tennyson, Carlyle and Thackeray. Of the *Rubáiyat*, Swinburne says: "Every quatrain, though it is something so much more than graceful or distinguished or elegant, is also the sublimation of elegance, the apotheosis of distinction, the transfiguration of grace."

It is related that the *Rubáiyat*, published anonymously in 1859, "fell dead from the press." In the course of time a few of the pamphlets were placed by the London publisher on his bargain counter, where a copy was purchased for a penny by a friend of the poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Rossetti, deeply impressed by the work,

## EDWARD FITZGERALD

brought it to the attention of Swinburne, whose published eulogy laid the foundation of the Omar cult in England. As the poem is a paraphrase, rather than a translation, I am not, in this work, placing it in the department of translation.

### *From "The Rubáiyat of Omar Kháyyám"*

*We come now to one of the few extraordinary long poems written in recent years; for "The Rubáiyat" stands with "Ave Atque Vale," "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" and one or two others of the same lofty order.*

*"The Rubáiyat" is so free a translation of Omar that it may be called a poem from the pen of Fitzgerald. And how masterly is the construction of the poem—how inevitable are the words, how fresh are the phrases, how ringing are the epigrams!*

*But I cannot speak so warmly of the philosophy of the poem—of its pessimism, its hedonism, its glorification of pleasure as the chief end of our existence. "We are not here to enjoy ourselves", says Professor Charles Mills Gayley, "but to behave ourselves." Omar assures us that only one thing is certain—death: therefore man's business is to live for the hour—to "take the Cash and let the Credit go"—to drink the cup of pleasure with no thought of the future. Pleasure—important as rational pleasure is—should not be looked on as the high purpose of our days on earth. Pleasure offers us only a "cheap" solution of the meaning of our mortal struggle. There is something higher than pleasure—higher even than happiness—and that higher thing is Blessedness. This is the high satisfaction that descends upon a man when, through self-surrender or other heroic action, he has put self aside and*

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*performed some difficult duty that confronted him. As Thomas Lake Harris says, there is a sorrow that is richer than the world's joy, and a burden that is easier than its rest.*

WAKE! For the Sun who scattered into flight  
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,  
Drives Night along with them from Heaven, and  
strikes  
The Sultan's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

Before the phantom of False morning died,  
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,  
"When all the Temple is prepared within,  
Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

And as the Cock crew, those who stood before  
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!  
You know how little while we have to stay,  
And, once departed, may return no more."

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,  
The thoughtful Soul to solitude retires,  
Where the White Hand of Moses on the Bough  
Puts out, and Jesus from the ground suspires. . . .

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:  
The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,  
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,  
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,  
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

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A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Some for the Glories of this World; and some  
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;  
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,  
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

Think, in this battered caravanseraï  
Whose portals are alternate Night and Day,  
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp  
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep  
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;  
And Bahráń, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass  
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;  
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropped in her lap from some once lovely Head.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green  
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows  
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!



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Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears  
To-DAY of past Regret and future Fears:  
To-MORROW!—Why, To-morrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's Seven thousand Years.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best  
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath pressed,  
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,  
And one by one crept silently to rest.

And we that now make merry in the Room  
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,  
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth  
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
Before we too into the Dust descend;  
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,  
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument  
About it and about: but evermore  
Came out by the same door where in I went.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,  
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;  
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped—  
“I came like Water, and like Wind I go.”

Up from Earth's Center through the Seventh Gate  
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,  
And many a knot unravelled by the Road;  
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

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There was the Door to which I found no Key;  
There was the Veil through which I might not see;  
    Some little talk awhile of *Me* and *Thee*  
There was—and then no more of *Thee* and *Me*.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,  
    Not one returns to tell us of the Road,  
Which to discover we must travel too.

The Revelations of Devout and Learned  
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burned,  
    Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep,  
They told their comrades and to sleep returned.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible  
Some letter of that After-life to spell;  
    And by and by my Soul returned to me,  
And answered, "I Myself am Heaven and Hell."

Heaven but the Vision of fulfilled Desire,  
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire  
    Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves  
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

We are no other than a moving row  
Of magic Shadow-shapes that come and go  
    Round with the Sun-illuminated Lantern held  
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays  
Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days;  
    Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,  
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

EDWARD FITZGERALD

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,  
But Here or There, as strikes the Player, goes;  
And He that tossed you down into the Field,  
He knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line  
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,  
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die,  
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for It  
As impotently moves as you or I.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead,  
And there of the Last Harvest sowed the Seed;  
And the first Morning of Creation wrote  
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read. . . .

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke  
A conscious Something to resent the yoke  
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain  
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid  
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allayed—  
Sue for a Debt we never did contract,  
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!

O Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin  
Beset the Road I was to wander in,  
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round  
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

EDWARD FITZGERALD

O Thou, who Man of Baser Earth didst make,  
And even with Paradise devise the Snake:  
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blackened—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

\* \* \* \* \*

As under cover of departing Day  
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,  
Once more within the Potter's house alone  
I stood surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,  
That stood along the floor and by the wall;  
And some loquacious vessels were; and some  
Listened perhaps, but never talked at all.

Said one among them—"Surely not in vain  
My substance of the common Earth was ta'en  
And to this Figure molded, to be broke,  
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."

After a momentary silence spake  
Some Vessel of a more ungainly make:  
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry:  
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,  
The little Moon looked in that all were seeking:  
And then they jogged each other, "Brother! Brother!  
Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,  
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,  
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,  
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

EDWARD FITZGERALD

That even my buried Ashes such a snare  
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air  
As not a True-believer passing by  
But shall be overtaken unaware.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long  
Have done my credit in the World much wrong:  
Have drowned my Glory in a shallow Cup,  
And sold my reputation for a Song.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before  
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?  
And then, and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand  
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

And much as Wine has played the Infidel,  
And robbed me of my Robe of Honor—Well,  
I often wonder what the Vintners buy  
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!  
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield  
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, revealed,  
To which the fainting Traveler might spring,  
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

Would but some wingèd Angel ere too late  
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,  
And make the stern Recorder otherwise  
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

EDWARD FITZGERALD

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then  
Remold it nearer to the Heart's desire!

\* \* \* \* \*

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—  
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;  
How oft hereafter rising look for us  
Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain!

And when like her, O Sáki, you shall pass  
Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,  
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